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MICHAEL MOORCOCK'S

ELRIC

the Dreaming City

By Roy Thomas and P. Craig Russell

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– P. Craig Russell

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– Mike Friedrich

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A tale of

ELRIC *of Melniboné,*

and of his enchanted runesword Stormbringer, also called Stealer of Souls.

the Dreaming City

Part I

SOMEWHERE ON THE LONELY COAST OF A WINDSWEPT FJORD, A HEAVY, OAKEN DOOR IS FLUNG WIDE...
...AND THE LIGHT FROM WITHIN SENDS SHADOWS FORTH TO FENCE WITH THOSE LURKING OUTSIDE.
SORRY I'M LATE, MY FRIENDS.
WHAT'S THE HOUR?
MIDNIGHT IS LONG PAST, COUNT SMIORGAN.
ARE YOU STILL SURE HE'LL COME?
IT'S SAID THAT HE'S A MAN OF HIS WORD...
...IF THAT COMFORTS YOU.
THAT'S SO-- FOR ALL YOUR IRONY, YARIS.
HE'LL COME, RIGHT ENOUGH.
HE'S GROWN BITTER, AND HAS NO LOVE FOR HIS COUSIN. WHY SHOULD HE?
AFTER ALL, YYRKOON SITS THE RUBY THRONE IN HIS PLACE, AND HAS PROCLAIMED HIM AN OUTCAST-- A TRAITOR.
HE NEEDS US...
...SO WE CAN TRUST HIM.

YOU'RE FULL OF TRUST TONIGHT, COUNT-- A RARE THING TO FIND IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES.
BUT, PERHAPS I SPEAK TO MEN MORE CREDULOUS THAN I.
WHAT OF YOU, DHARMIT? SHALL WE WASTE MORE TIME WAITING ON ELRIC'S PLEASURE?
THINK YOU NOT, FADAN OF LORMYR, THAT HE'S EVEN NOW LAUGHING AT US IN SOME DISTANT TAVERN?
AND YOU, KING NACLON--DO YOU NOT SUSPECT HE MAY BE PLOTTING WITH THE DRAGON PRINCES TO ENTRAP US, AT THIS VERY MOMENT?
AND YOU, JIKU-- DO NOT THINK--
I THINK, YARRIS, THAT YOU BEGIN TO BORE ME WITH YOUR PRATTLE.
WELL, I'M NEITHER BORED... NOR YET CONVINCED.
HAVE YOU EVIDENCE TO BACK YOUR CHARGES, YARIS?
I ONLY KNOW THAT WE HAVE TOO LITTLE TIME IN WHICH TO STRIKE; OUR FLEET IS TOO BIG, TOO NOTICEABLE.
I SAY, LET'S SET SAIL NOW, BEFORE THE DREAMING CITY HEARS OF OUR PLAN AND BRINGS UP REINFORCEMENTS!
YOU KNOW WE CANNOT REACH IMRRYR WITHOUT ELRIC'S HELP.
WE MUST WAIT FOR HIM-- OR ELSE GIVE UP OUR PLANS AND RETURN TO OUR HOMELANDS.
BY THE GODS, YOU'RE GETTING OLD, ALL OF YOU!
TREASURES ARE WON ONLY BY SWIFT SLAYING AND RECKLESS ATTACK!
FOOL!
I SPOKE THUS IN MY YOUTH... AND LOST A FINE FLEET SOON AFTER.

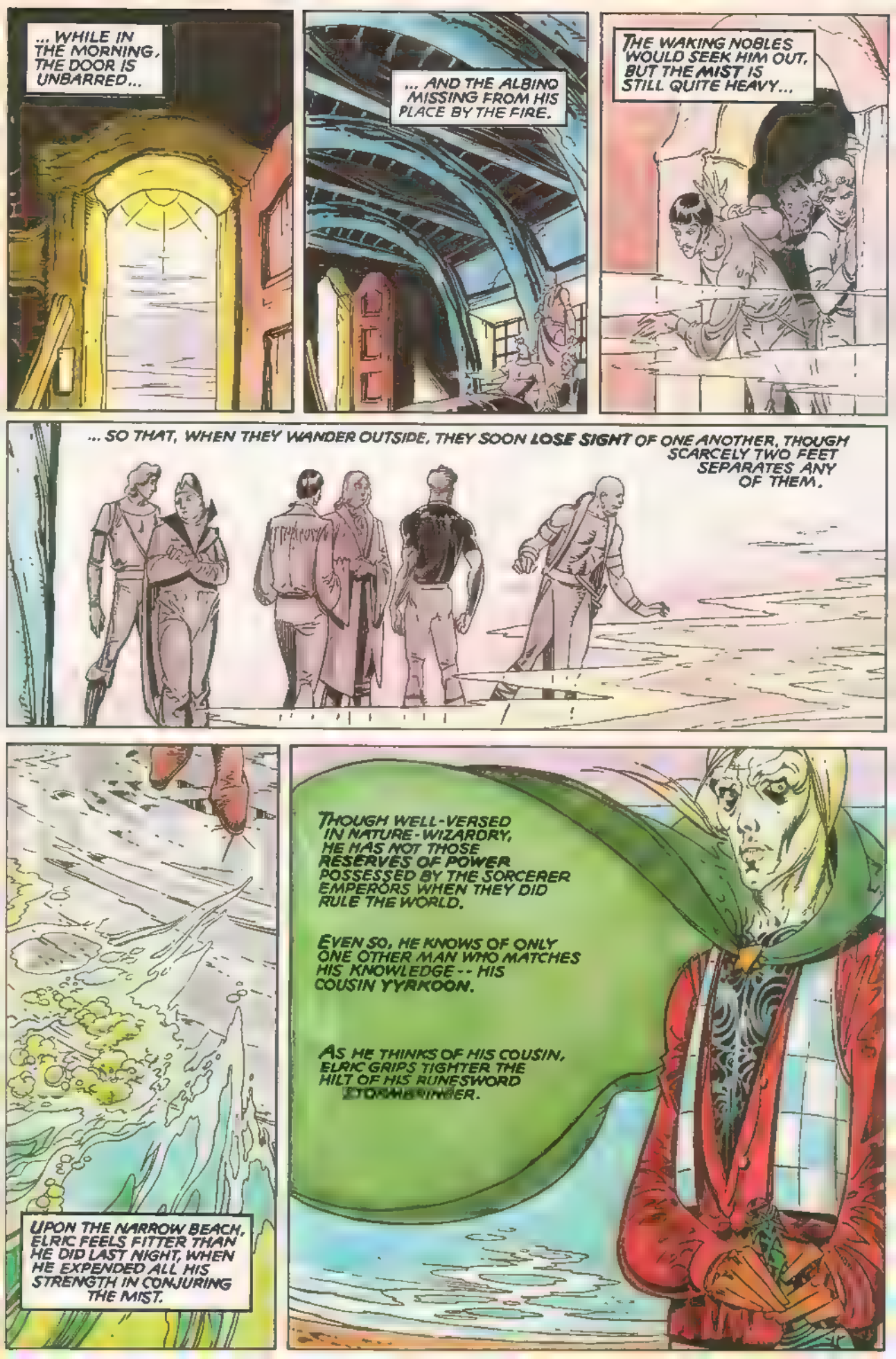
IT'S TRUE-- WE STAND HERE, THE MOST POWERFUL SEA LORDS IN THE WORLD.
OUR NAMES ARE FEARED AND FAMOUS; OUR FLEETS RAVAGE THE COASTS OF A SCORE OF LESSER NATIONS.
WE HOLD POWER!
BUT ALL THIS IS USELESS-- WITHOUT THE POWER THAT ELRIC HAS.
THE POWER OF KNOWLEDGE-- OF SORCERY, IF I MUST USE THE HATED WORD!
IMRRYR, THE DREAMING CITY, DREAMS IN PEACE-- AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO UNLESS HE GUIDES US THROUGH THE TREACHEROUS WATERWAYS WHICH LEAD TO HER HARBORS.
WE NEED ELRIC. WE KNOW IT, AND HE KNOWS IT.
THAT'S THE TRUTH!
SUCH CONFIDENCE, GENTLEMEN...
...IS WARMING TO THE HEART.
WHAT REMAINS OF YARIS' BRAVADO FLEES FROM HIM AS HE MEETS THE CRIMSON EYES OF THIS PURE ALBINO WHO AFFECTS THE DRESS OF A SOUTHERN BARBARIAN.
THEY ARE OLD EYES IN A FINE-FEATURED, YOUTHFUL FACE... EYES WHICH STARE INTO ETERNITY.

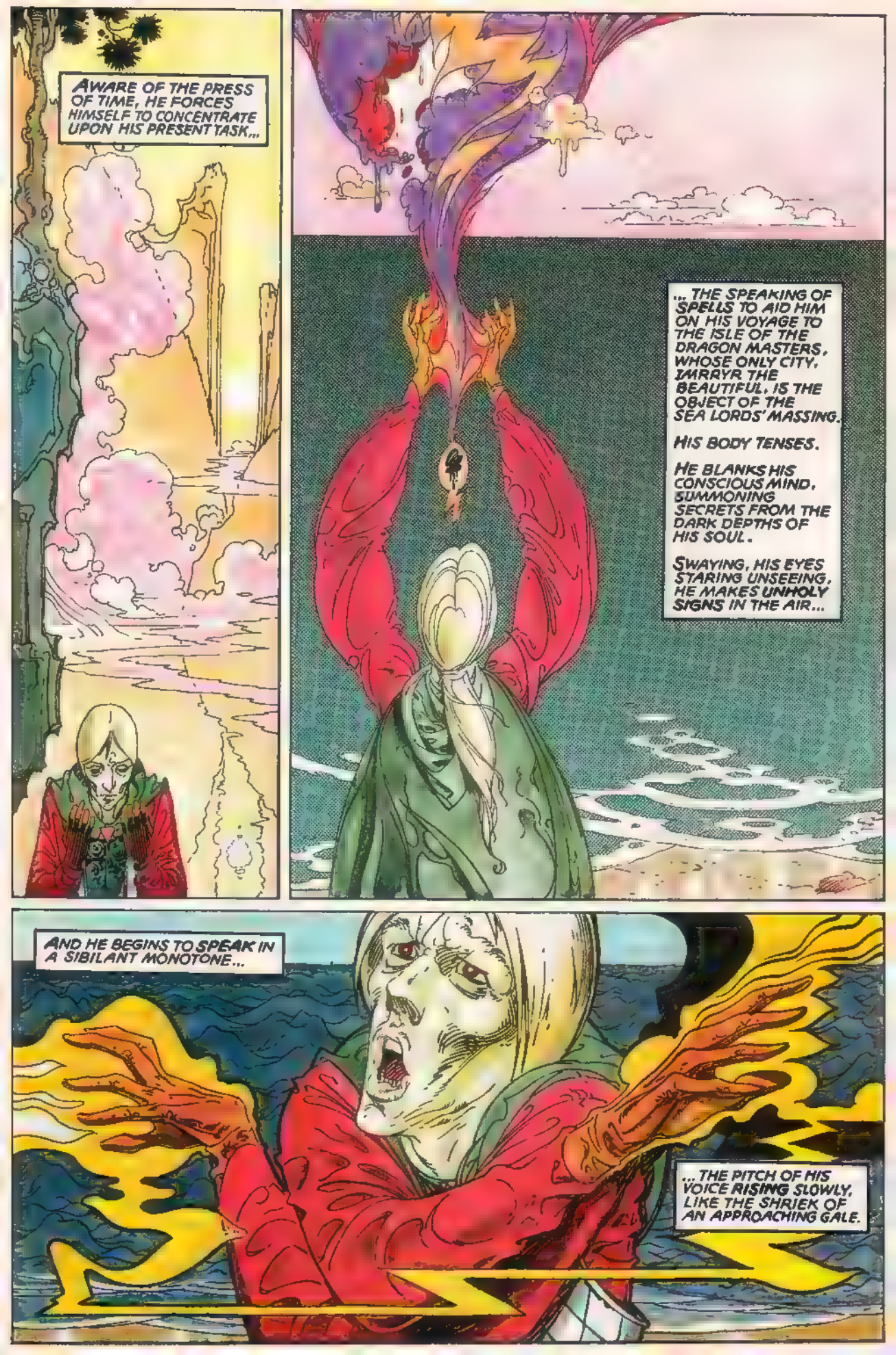
WELL? IS NO ONE GOING TO INVITE ME IN?
VERY WELL.
ELRIC, OLD FRIEND--WHEN DO WE RAID IMRRYR?
AS SOON AS YOU LIKE.
I CARE NOT.
I NEED ONLY A LITTLE TIME IN WHICH TO DO... CERTAIN THINGS.
TOMORROW? SHALL WE SAIL TOMORROW?
THREE DAYS' TIME... PERHAPS MORE.
BUT--IMRRYR WILL BE WARNED OF OUR PRESENCE BY THEN!
I'LL SEE THAT YOUR FLEET'S NOT DISCOVERED. BUT I MYSELF MUST GO TO IMRRYR FIRST... AND RETURN.
IN THREE DAYS? THE FASTEST SHIP COULD NOT--
I'LL BE IN THE DREAMING CITY IN LESS THAN A DAY.
IF YOU SAY SO, I'LL BELIEVE IT--BUT WHY THIS NECESSITY TO VISIT THE CITY AHEAD OF THE RAID?
I'VE MY OWN COMPUNCTIONS, COUNT SMIORGAN... BUT WORRY NOT, I SHAN'T BETRAY YOU.
I HAVE A DEBT TO SETTLE; THIS IS MY ONLY REASON FOR AIDING YOU.
AS YOU KNOW, I HAVE MADE ONLY A FEW CONDITIONS: THAT YOU RAZE THE CITY TO THE GROUND, AND THAT A CERTAIN MAN AND WOMAN ARE NOT HARMED.
I REFER TO MY COUSIN YYRKOON AND HIS SISTER CYMORIL...

CYMORIL! AT THE VERY SOUND OF HER NAME UPON HIS OWN PALE LIPS, ELRIC KNOWS VISIONS OF ANOTHER LAND, AND OTHER DAYS.
BUT YYRKOON USURPS THESE VISIONS, ALSO--EVEN AS HE ONCE USURPED THE RUBY THRONE, FROM WHICH HE WOULD ORDER HIS ALBINO COUSIN'S DEATH, IF EVER HE WERE CAUGHT WITHIN THE WALLS OF IMRRYR.
IMRRYR.
THE DREAMING CITY FELL, IN SPIRIT, FIVE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.
IF ELRIC OF MELNIBONÉ HAS HIS WAY, SHE SOON WILL FALL COMPLETELY--AND FOREVER.
IMRRYR...

A VOICE WHICH PRETENDS TO MORE CONFIDENCE THAN IT FEELS CALLS HIM BACK...
HOW SHALL WE HIDE THE FLEET, LORD ELRIC?
I'LL GO NOW TO HIDE IT FOR YOU.
COUNT SMIORGAN, WILL YOU MAKE CERTAIN ALL YOU SEA LORDS' MEN ARE OFF THE SHIPS FIRST?
AS YOU WISH, MY FRIEND.
HOW COULD HE HIDE OUR WHOLE FLEET IN THIS SINGLE FJORD?
THE QUESTION HOVERS UNANSWERED IN THE AIR...
...FOR A CONSIDERABLE TIME.
THEN, AT THE SOUND OF A SLAMMING DOOR...
COUNT SMIORGAN! WHY ARE YOU SHIVERING, MAN?
WELL? DID ELRIC HIDE THE FLEET--OR DID HE NOT?
HE... HAS HIDDEN IT.
ALL AT ONCE? WHAT DID HE DO?
LET ME, DHARMIT.
IT'S NO GOOD.
THE NIGHT MIST'S TOO THICK.

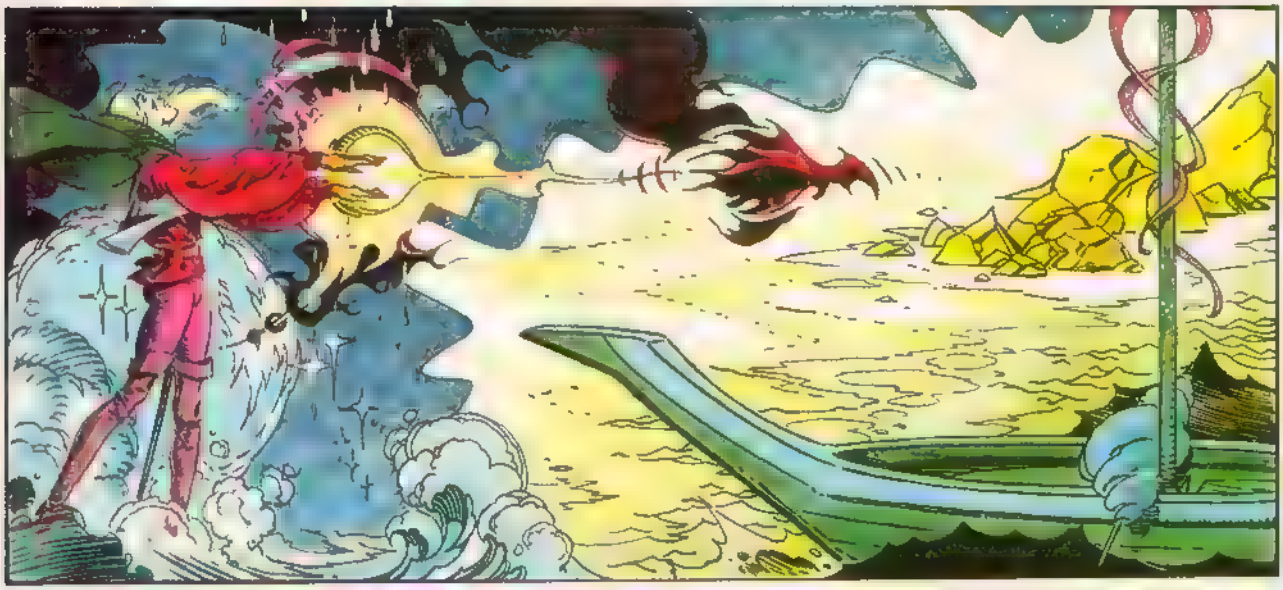
I CAN'T TELL WHETHER OUR SHIPS ARE ANCHORED IN THE FJORD OR NOT.
WAIT! THERE'S SOME-THING--
Uhhh...
WHAT IS IT, YARIS?
IT'S--
--G-GREETINGS, LORD ELRIC--!
WINE.
WINE, DO YOU HEAR ME?
HERE... BUT WHAT...?
I'VE DONE WHAT'S NEEDED... AND IT'S COST ME HARD.
NOW I WILL SLEEP.
NONE OF THE SIX SEA LORDS SLEEPS OVERMUCH THIS NIGHT...


... WHILE IN THE MORNING, THE DOOR IS UNBARRED...
... AND THE ALBINO MISSING FROM HIS PLACE BY THE FIRE.
THE WAKING NOBLES WOULD SEEK HIM OUT, BUT THE MIST IS STILL QUITE HEAVY...
... SO THAT, WHEN THEY WANDER OUTSIDE, THEY SOON LOSE SIGHT OF ONE ANOTHER, THOUGH SCARCELY TWO FEET SEPARATES ANY OF THEM.
UPON THE NARROW BEACH, ELRIC FEELS FITTER THAN HE DID LAST NIGHT, WHEN HE EXPENDED ALL HIS STRENGTH IN CONJURING THE MIST.
THOUGH WELL-VERSED IN NATURE-WIZARDRY, HE HAS NOT THOSE RESERVES OF POWER POSSESSED BY THE SORCERER EMPERORS WHEN THEY DID RULE THE WORLD.
EVEN SO, HE KNOWS OF ONLY ONE OTHER MAN WHO MATCHES HIS KNOWLEDGE -- HIS COUSIN YYRKOON.
AS HE THINKS OF HIS COUSIN, ELRIC GRIPS TIGHTER THE HILT OF HIS RUNESWORD STORMBRINGER.

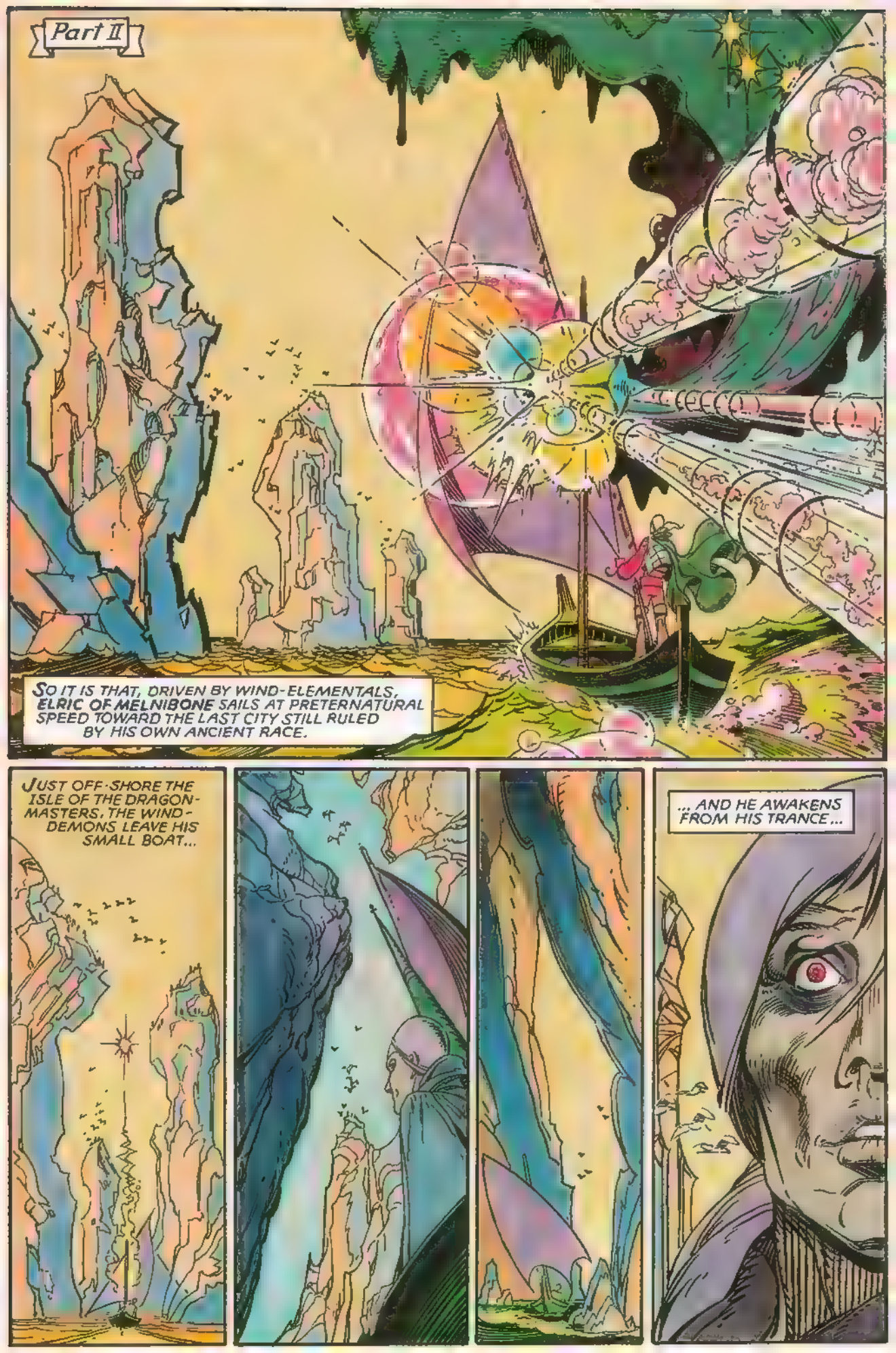

AWARE OF THE PRESS OF TIME, HE FORCES HIMSELF TO CONCENTRATE UPON HIS PRESENT TASK...
... THE SPEAKING OF SPELLS TO AID HIM ON HIS VOYAGE TO THE ISLE OF THE DRAGON MASTERS, WHOSE ONLY CITY, IARRYR THE BEAUTIFUL, IS THE OBJECT OF THE SEA LORDS' MASSING.
HIS BODY TENSES.
HE BLANKS HIS CONSCIOUS MIND, SUMMONING SECRETS FROM THE DARK DEPTHS OF HIS SOUL.
SWAYING, HIS EYES STARING UNSEEING, HE MAKES UNHOLY SIGNS IN THE AIR...
AND HE BEGINS TO SPEAK IN A SIBILANT MONOTONE...
... THE PITCH OF HIS VOICE RISING SLOWLY, LIKE THE SHRIEK OF AN APPROACHING GALE.

THEN, QUITE SUDDENLY, THAT VOICE RISES HIGHER, UNTIL IT IS HOWLING WILDLY, INHUMANLY, AS IT SUMMONS THE **WIND ELEMENTALS:**

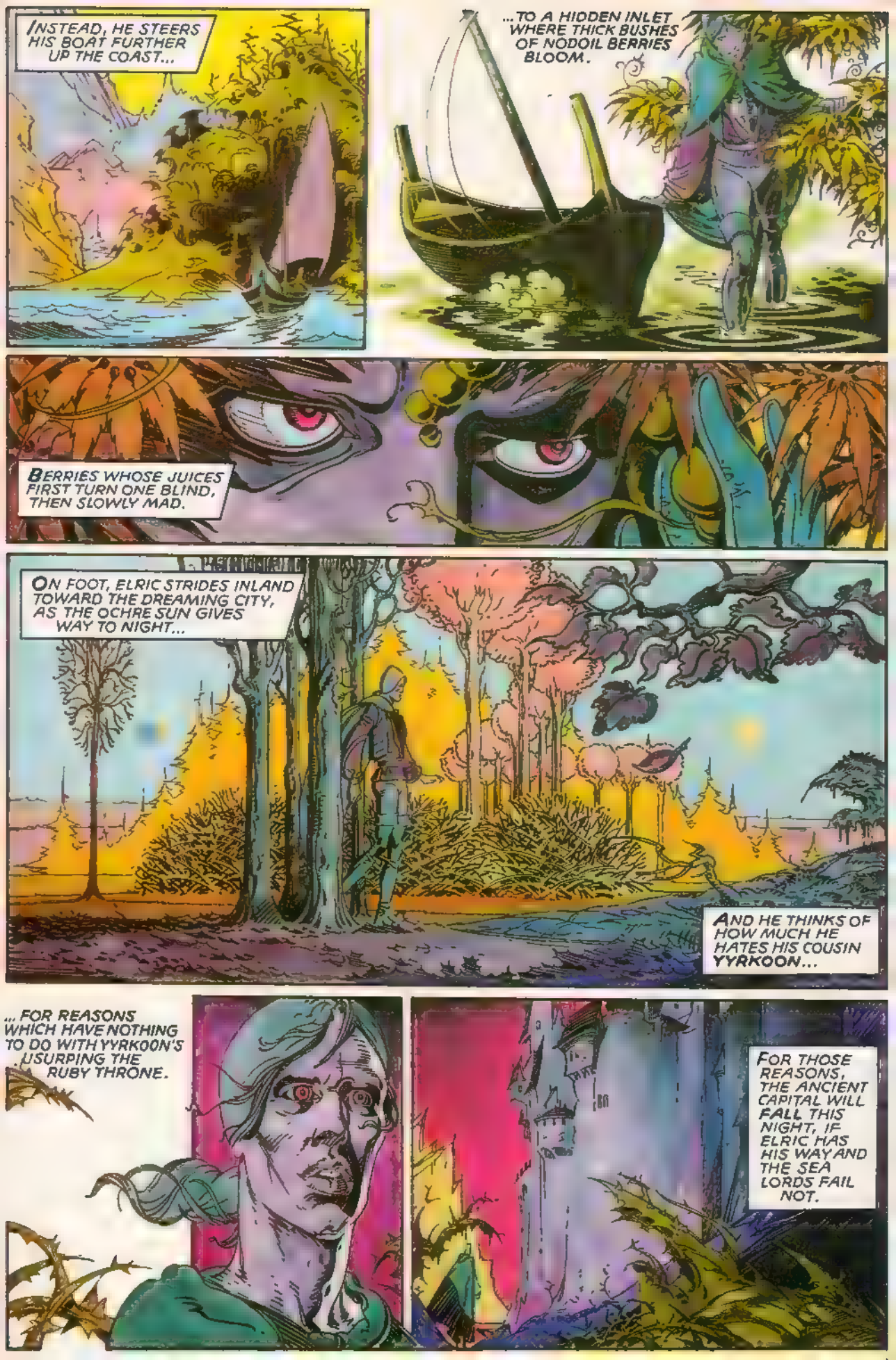
HAZY AND FORMLESS, THEY EDDY ABOUT HIM AS, STIFF-LIMBED, HE ENTERS HIS OWN SAILING-BOAT.



LIKE AN AUTOMATON, HIS FINGERS RUN UP THE SAIL, SET IT.
THEN, FROM OUT OF THE PLACID SEA, A GREAT WAVE...
...WHICH SMASHES DOWN UPON THE SMALL SHIP, BEARING IT OUT TO SEA.
AND ALL THE WHILE, ELRIC SITS BLANK-EYED IN THE STERN, CROONING HIS HIDEOUS SONG OF SORCERY...
...AS THE SHRIEKING SPIRITS OF THE AIR PLUCK AT THE SAIL AND SEND HIM FLYING OVER THE WATER...
...WITH ONLY WIND-DEMONS FOR HIS SHIPMATES.


Part II
SO IT IS THAT, DRIVEN BY WIND-ELEMENTALS, ELRIC OF MELNIBONE SAILS AT PRETERNATURAL SPEED TOWARD THE LAST CITY STILL RULED BY HIS OWN ANCIENT RACE.
JUST OFF-SHORE THE ISLE OF THE DRAGON-MASTERS, THE WIND-DEMONS LEAVE HIS SMALL BOAT...
... AND HE AWAKENS FROM HIS TRANCE...

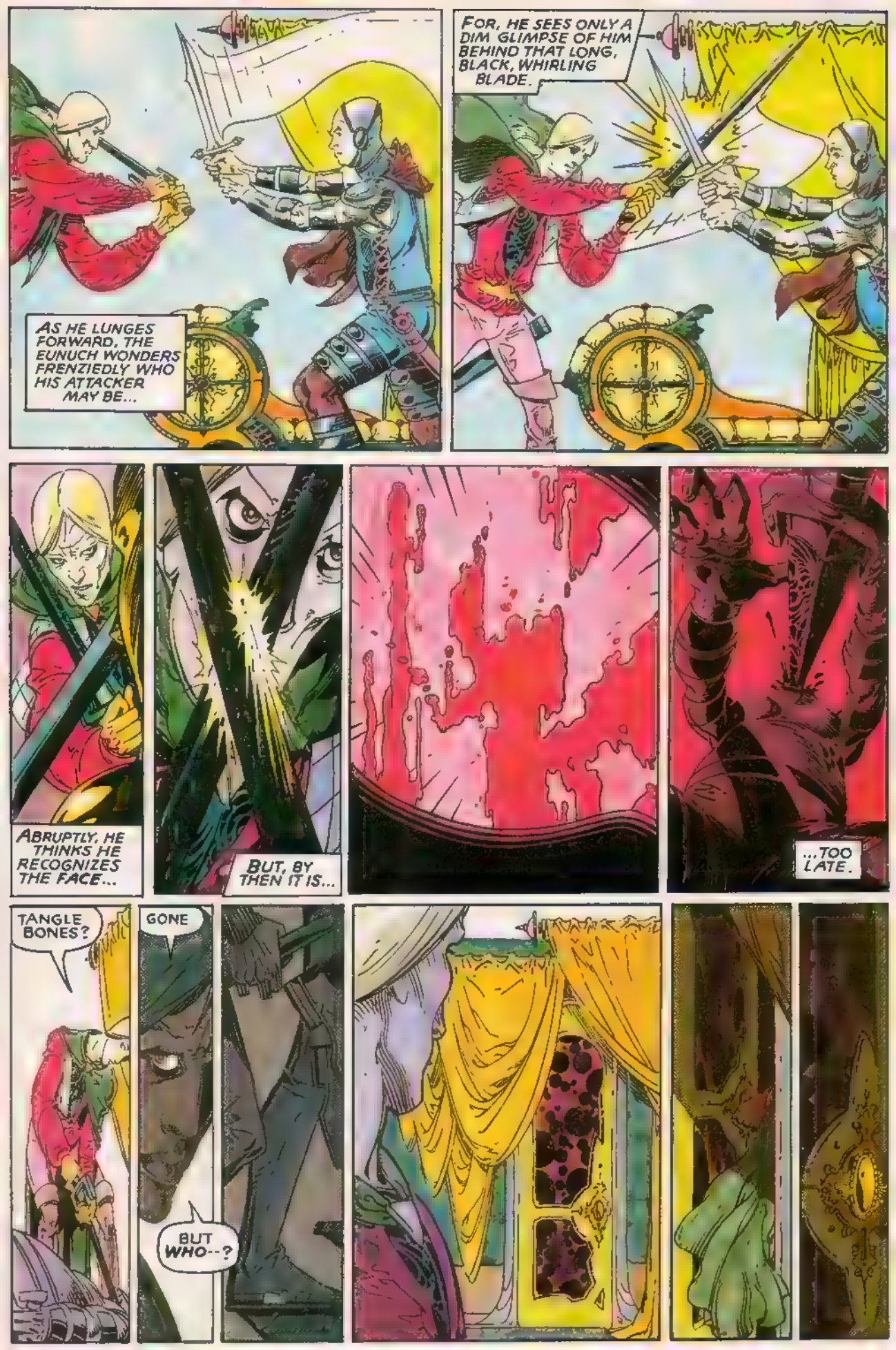
...TO REGARD WITH FRESH WONDER THE DELICATE TOWERS OF IMRRYR THE BEAUTIFUL...
...GUARDED STILL BY THE FORMIDABLE SEA-WALL WITH ITS GREAT GATE... THE FIVE-DOORED MAZE... AND THE TWISTING, HIGH-WALLED CHAMBERS, ONLY ONE OF WHICH LEADS TO THE INNER HARBOR OF IMRRYR.
THOUGH HE KNOWS THE ROUTE PERFECTLY, ELRIC DARES NOT RISK ENTERING THE HARBOR VIA THE MAZE..


INSTEAD, HE STEERS HIS BOAT FURTHER UP THE COAST...
...TO A HIDDEN INLET WHERE THICK BUSHES OF NODOIL BERRIES BLOOM.
BERRIES WHOSE JUICES FIRST TURN ONE BLIND, THEN SLOWLY MAD.
ON FOOT, ELRIC STRIDES INLAND TOWARD THE DREAMING CITY, AS THE OCHRE SUN GIVES WAY TO NIGHT...
AND HE THINKS OF HOW MUCH HE HATES HIS COUSIN YYRKOON...
... FOR REASONS WHICH HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH YYRKOON'S USURPING THE RUBY THRONE.
FOR THOSE REASONS, THE ANCIENT CAPITAL WILL FALL THIS NIGHT, IF ELRIC HAS HIS WAY AND THE SEA LORDS FAIL NOT.

AT LAST HE REACHES THE CITY.
...TO SLIP THROUGH AN UN-GUARDED GATE
...MOVING UPWARD THROUGH UNLIGHTED STREETS..
...TOWARD YYRKOON'S GREAT PALACE.
NO LIFE-SOUND EMANATES FROM THE SLEEPING CITY...
... WHERE THE DRAGON MASTERS AND THEIR LADIES DREAM DRUG-INDUCED DREAMS OF GRANDEUR AND INCREDIBLE HORROR...
WHILE THEIR SLAVES TRY NOT TO DREAM AT ALL...
YET, THERE ARE NOISES, FROM TIME TO TIME:
CURFEW GUARDS...
...OR A SCREAM FROM ABOVE...
A BRIEF ONE.
ELRIC IS NOT APPALLED BY THE SOUNDS AND THE DIM SIGHTS.
HE IS STILL, AFTER ALL, A MELNIBONEAN.

AND EVEN AS HE REACHES A BACK DOOR OF THE PALACE, HE REMEMBERS HIS LIFE IS FORFEIT IF HE IS CAPTURED IN IMRRYR.
A CREAKING SOUND, ABOVE:
IS IT... THE KING?
IT'S PRINCE ELRIC
YOU FORGET, TANGLEBONES, OLD FRIEND, THAT A NEW KING SITS THE RUBY THRONE.
THE DRAGON ISLE HAS BUT ONE KING, WHATEVER USURPER WOULD HAVE IT OTHERWISE.
SHE... STILL SLEEPS, SIRE.
I GUESSED AS MUCH.
I DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE MY GOOD COUSIN'S POWERS OF SORCERY.
QUIET NOW, SIRE...
ONE OF THE SILENT GUARDS!

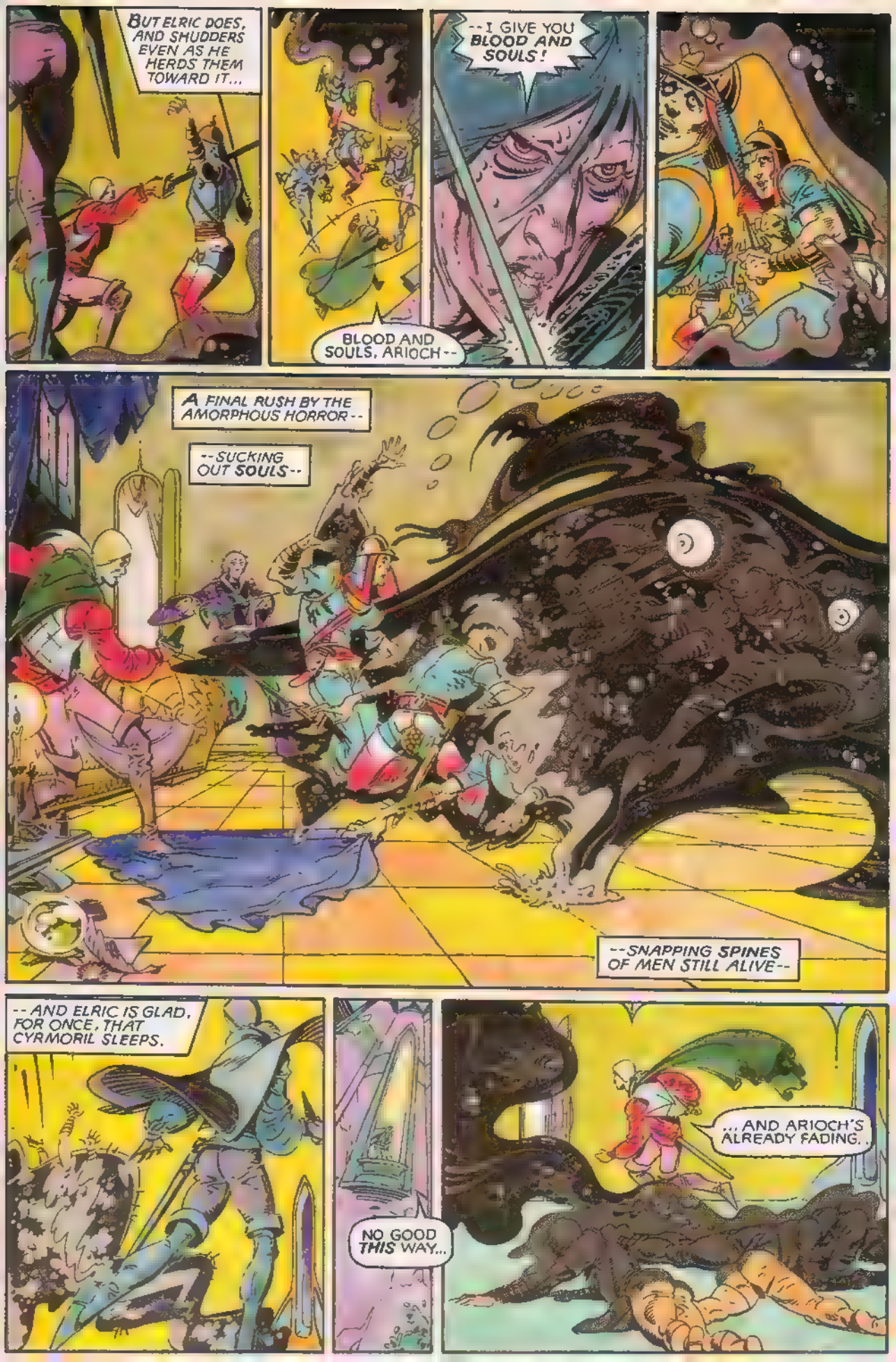
WELL, I TAUGHT YOU THE ARTS OF FENCING AND ARCHERY, DID I NOT?
IF I CAN'T HIT A EUNUCH IN THE EYE... !
DAMN! HE MOVED!
NOT YOUR FAULT, TANGLE-BONES.
I'LL GET HIM!
ELRIC'S RUNESWORD STORMBRINGER HOWLS IN A SEARING ARC AS IT CUTS THROUGH THE EUNUCH'S BONE BOW..
NOR CAN TONGUELESS EUNUCHS CRY FOR HELP.
THEY CAN ONLY DRAW SHORT-SWORDS...
...AND HOPE THAT METALLIC ECHOES WILL BE HEARD BY OTHERS NEAR AT HAND.


AS HE LUNGES FORWARD, THE EUNUCH WONDERS FRENZIEDLY WHO HIS ATTACKER MAY BE...
FOR, HE SEES ONLY A DIM GLIMPSE OF HIM BEHIND THAT LONG, BLACK, WHIRLING BLADE.
ABRUPTLY, HE THINKS HE RECOGNIZES THE FACE...
BUT, BY THEN IT IS...
...TOO LATE.
TANGLE BONES?
GONE
BUT WHO--?

AND THERE, BEHIND THE NEWLY-LOCKED DOOR..
CYMORIL.
...COUSIN...
CYMORIL... WAKE UP...
OPEN UP IN THERE!

HO, SOLDIERS--
WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE?
HAS SOMEONE TRIED TO SEE MY POOR SLEEPING SISTER?
YYRKOON--THE BLACK HELLSPAWN!
WHOEVER IS IN THERE--IF MY GOOD SISTER IS HARMED, YOU WILL NEVER DIE--BUT YOU WILL PRAY TO YOUR GODS THAT YOU COULD!
YYRKOON, YOU PALTRY RABBLE--YOU CANNOT THREATEN ONE WHO IS YOUR EQUAL IN THE DARK ARTS!
ELRIC...?
SO YOU HAVE RETURNED!
WELL, ANY ATTEMPT TO WAKEN MY SISTER WILL NOT ONLY SLAY HER--
--BUT WILL SEND HER SOUL INTO THE DEEPEST HELL--
--WHERE YOU WILL WILLINGLY JOIN IT!
SOLDIERS! BREAK DOWN THE DOOR AND TAKE THAT TRAITOR ALIVE!
THERE ARE TWO THINGS, ELRIC, YOU WILL NEVER AGAIN HAVE--
--MY SISTER'S LOVE--
--AND THE RUBY THRONE!

THE DOOR'S UNLOCKED NOW, FOOLS! IN WITH YOU!
YES, SIRE! I'LL--
Eh?
ARIOCH--
HELP ME, ARIOCH--
I GIVE YOU BLOOD AND SOULS! ONLY AID ME NOW!
THIS MAN I GIVE YOU, MIGHTY KING OF HELL...
AND, IN A FAR CORNER OF THE GLOOMY CHAMBER...
AID YOUR SERVANT, ELRIC OF MELNIBONÉ!
GOKK
...A BLACKER MIST BEGINS SLOWLY TO FORM.
ALIVE, DAMN YOU!
I WANT HIM TAKEN ALIVE, TO SAMPLE THE THOUSAND DEATHS!
BLOOD AND SOULS FOR MY LORD ARIOCH!
AID ME, EVIL ONE!
THE WARRIORS DO NOT SEE THE DARK THING IN THE CORNER..


BUT ELRIC DOES, AND SHUDDERS EVEN AS HE HERDS THEM TOWARD IT...
BLOOD AND SOULS, ARIOCH--
--I GIVE YOU BLOOD AND SOULS!
A FINAL RUSH BY THE AMORPHOUS HORROR--
--SUCKING OUT SOULS--
--SNAPPING SPINES OF MEN STILL ALIVE--
--AND ELRIC IS GLAD, FOR ONCE, THAT CYRMORIL SLEEPS.
NO GOOD THIS WAY...
...AND ARIOCH'S ALREADY FADING.

... BEFORE HE GARNERS ALL THE SOULS I WISH HE WOULD CLAIM!
WH-WHAT IS HAPPENING, KING ELRIC? WHAT'S IN THERE??
NO TIME, OLD FRIEND.
WE MUST HURRY WHILE YYRKOON IS STILL ENGAGED WITH... HIS CURRENT PROBLEM.
IN FIVE DAYS' TIME, TANGLEBONES, IMRRYR WILL EXPERIENCE A NEW PHASE IN HER HISTORY... PERHAPS THE LAST.
I WANT YOU TO MAKE SURE THAT CYMORIL IS SAFE... IS THAT CLEAR?
AYE, LORD, BUT--
I WILL RETURN IN FIVE DAYS... WITH COMPANIONS.
YOU WILL UNDERSTAND WHAT I MEAN WHEN THAT TIME COMES.
TAKE CYMORIL TO THE TOWER OF D'A'RPUTNA--
--AND AWAIT ME THERE!
THEN ELRIC IS GONE, SOFT-FOOTED...
...THE SHRIEKS OF THE DYING STILL RINGING THROUGH THE BLACKNESS AFTER HIM.
PERHAPS HE WILL ALWAYS HEAR THEM.

Part III
SINCE HIS RETURN TO THE FJORD AND THE FLEET'S SUBSEQUENT SAILING, ELRIC HAS SPOKEN ONLY ORDERS...
..AND THOSE IN THE TERSEST OF TERMS.
THE SEA LORDS MUTTER WHAT A GREAT HATE FESTERS HIS SOUL, MAKING HIM A DANGEROUS MAN TO HAVE WHETHER AS COMRADE OR ENEMY...
... AND EVEN COUNT SMIORGAN AVOIDS THE MOODY ALBINO.
AVOIDING HIS EYES, THE CREWMEN GO ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS OF PREPARING FOR THE INVASION...
FOR, THE CREWS OF THE SHIPS ARE ALSO THE WARRIORS WHO WILL ATTACK IMRRYR.
THERE IS NO WASTAGE OF GOOD MAN-POWER IN THE SEA LORDS' FLEET.
AND SO THE REAVER PROWS PLOUGH STEADILY EASTWARD...
..TO RAPE AND PLUNDER THE WORLD'S OLDEST CITY.
THEN, TWO DAYS AFTER THE FLEET SET SAIL...
THERE! LAND HO!

TODAY, YYRKOON... AYE, THIS VERY DAY...

...THE FATE OF IMRRYR WILL BE SETTLED... AS SHALL ALSO YOURS AND MINE!

IMRRYR -- THE DREAMING CIT

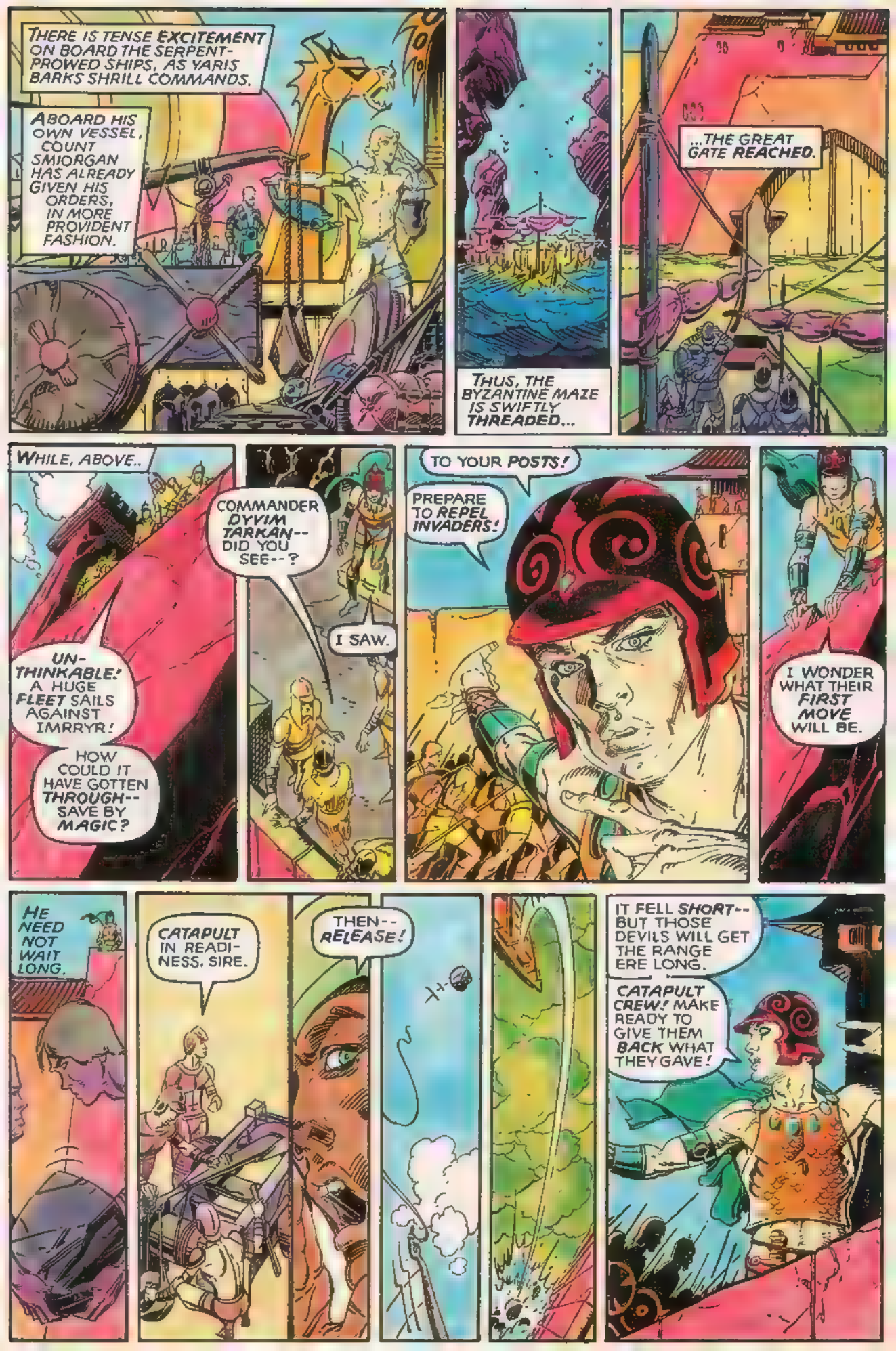
NO LIFE-SOUND EMANATES FROM ITS SPIRALING LANES OR MANY-TOWERED CASTLES...

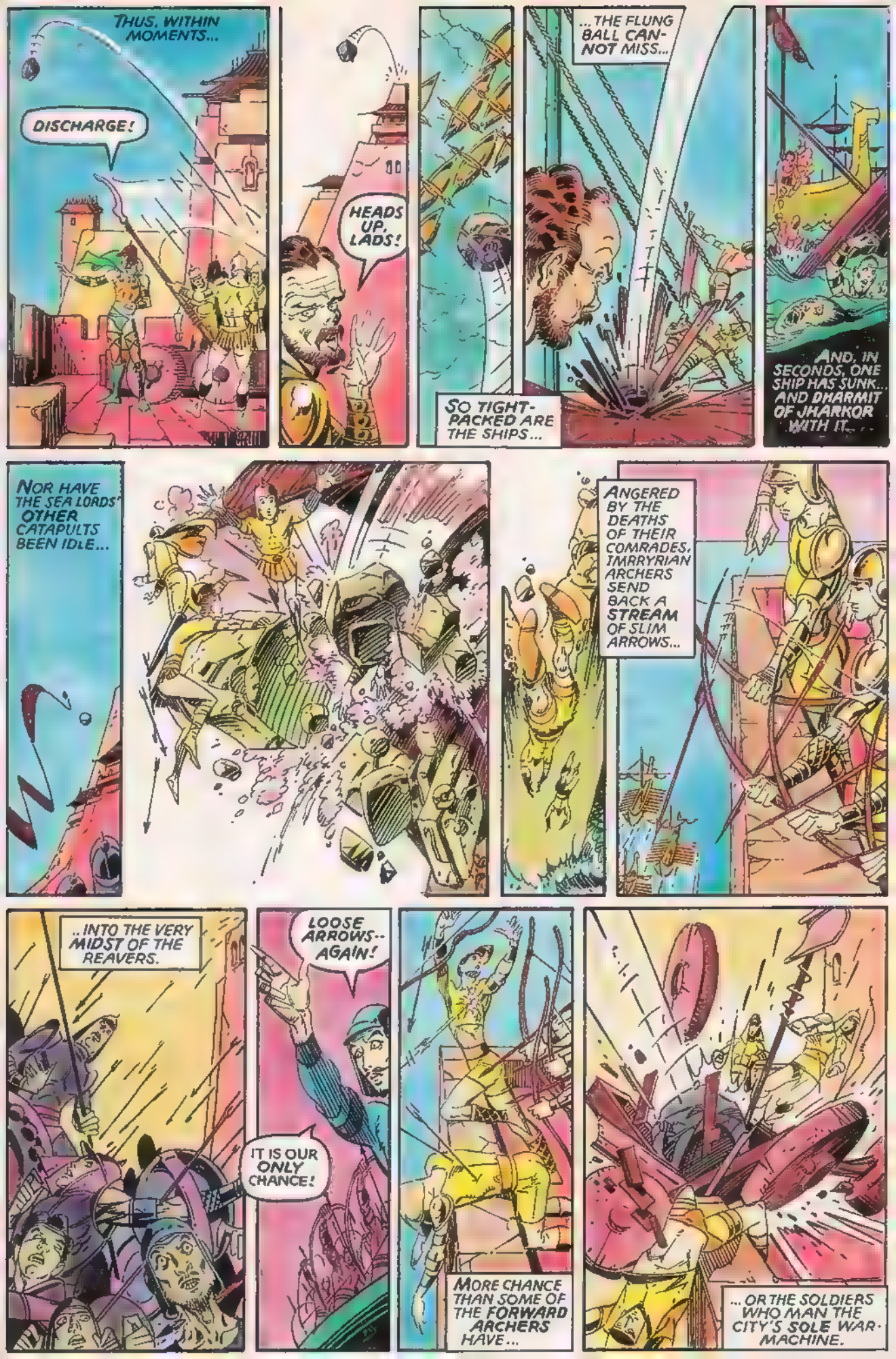
...ONLY A SENSE OF SOPORIFIC DESOLATION, AS THE CITY SLEEPS, AND ITS PEOPLE DREAM THEIR DRUG-INDUCED DREAMS.

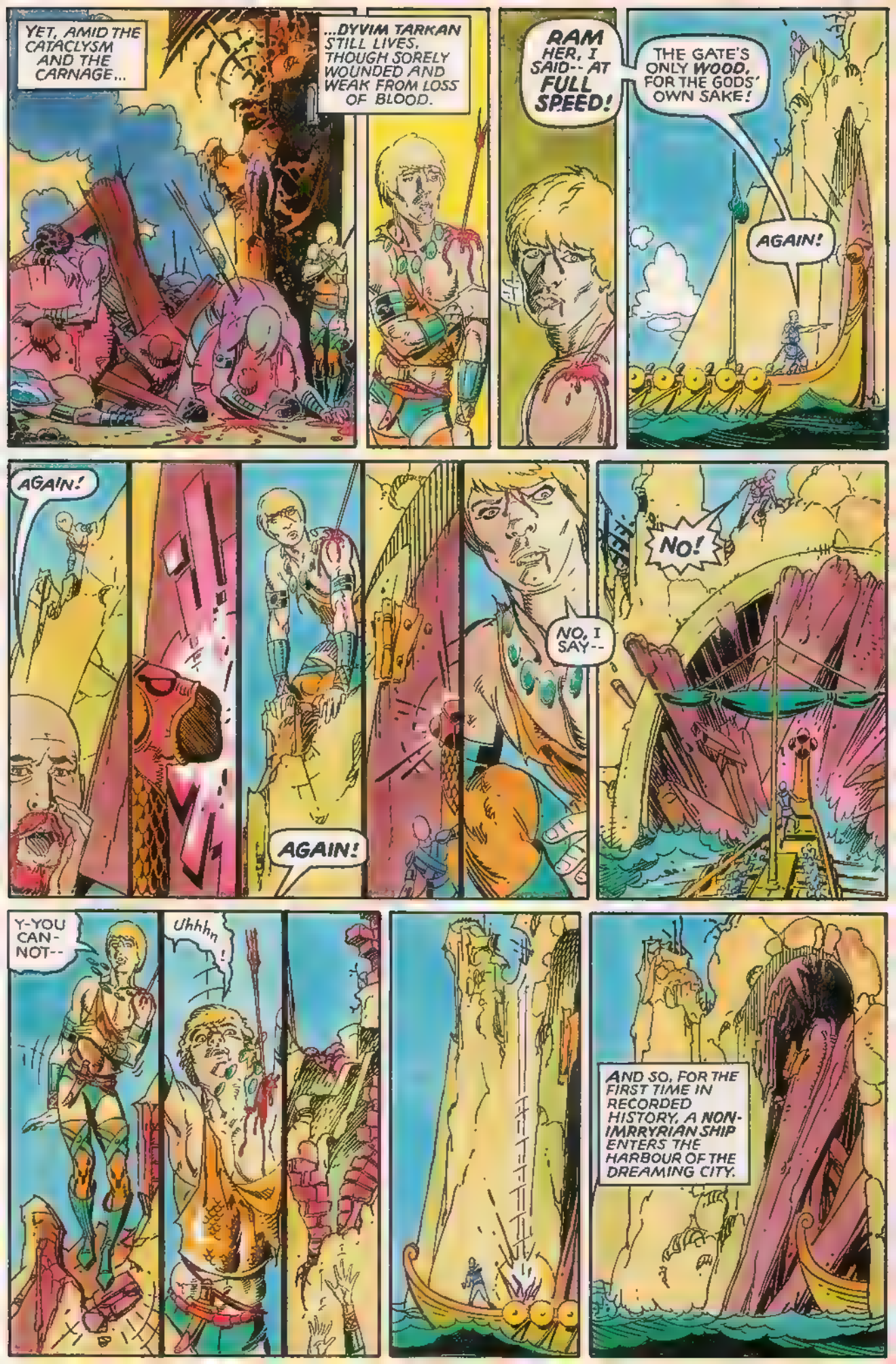
NO SHIPS BUT THOSE OF IMRRYR ARE ALLOWED TO PASS THROUGH THE GREAT GATE IN THE CENTER OF ITS MASSIVE SEA-WALL...

AND THE ROUTE THROUGH THE MAZE... EVEN ITS EXACT ENTRANCE... IS A SECRET WELL-KEPT FROM PRYING OUTSIDERS.

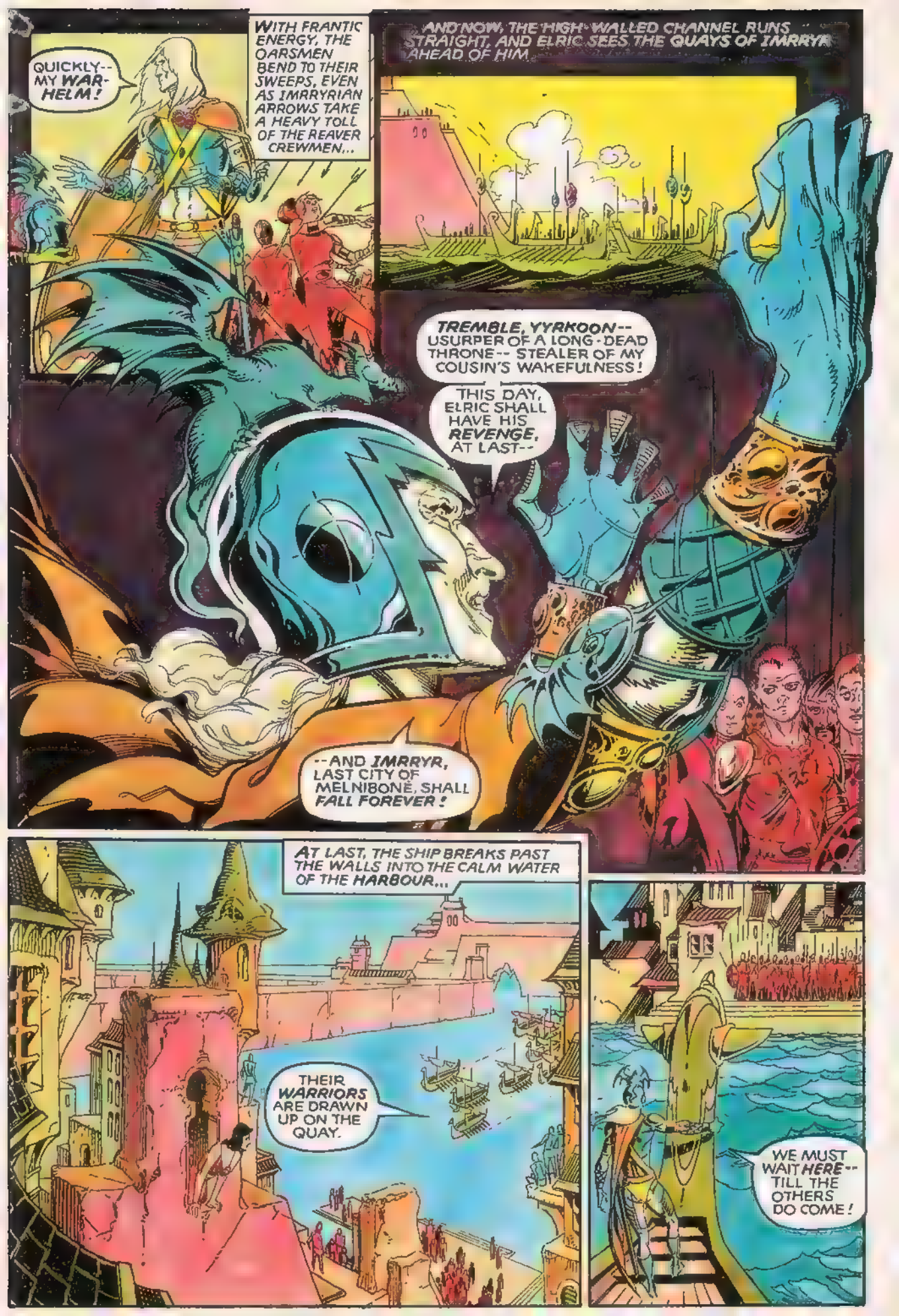
ELRIC OF MELNIBONÉ, HOWEVER, IS NO OUTSIDER.

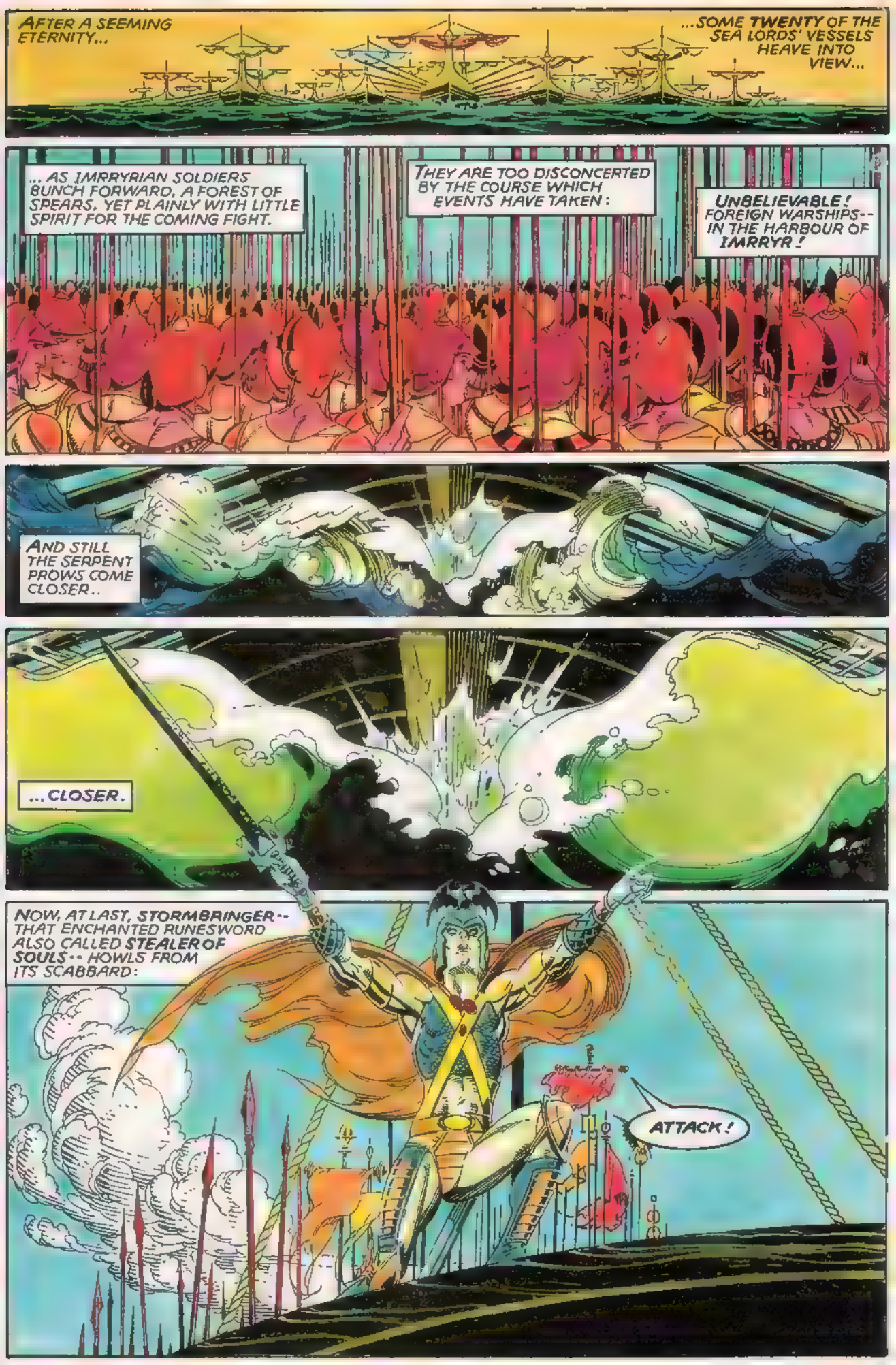

THERE IS TENSE EXCITEMENT ON BOARD THE SERPENT-PROWED SHIPS, AS YARIS BARKS SHRILL COMMANDS.
ABOARD HIS OWN VESSEL, COUNT SMIORGAN HAS ALREADY GIVEN HIS ORDERS, IN MORE PROVIDENT FASHION.
THUS, THE BYZANTINE MAZE IS SWIFTLY THREADED...
...THE GREAT GATE REACHED.
WHILE, ABOVE..
COMMANDER DYVIM TARKAN-- DID YOU SEE--?
I SAW.
UN-THINKABLE! A HUGE FLEET SAILS AGAINST IMRRYR!
HOW COULD IT HAVE GOTTEN THROUGH-- SAVE BY MAGIC?
TO YOUR POSTS!
PREPARE TO REPEL INVADERS!
I WONDER WHAT THEIR FIRST MOVE WILL BE.
HE NEED NOT WAIT LONG.
CATAPULT IN READINESS, SIRE.
THEN-- RELEASE!
IT FELL SHORT-- BUT THOSE DEVILS WILL GET THE RANGE ERE LONG.
CATAPULT CREW! MAKE READY TO GIVE THEM BACK WHAT THEY GAVE!


THUS, WITHIN MOMENTS...
DISCHARGE!
HEADS UP, LADS!
...THE FLUNG BALL CANNOT MISS...
SO TIGHT-PACKED ARE THE SHIPS...
AND, IN SECONDS, ONE SHIP HAS SUNK... AND DHARMIT OF JHARKOR WITH IT...
NOR HAVE THE SEA LORDS' OTHER CATAPULTS BEEN IDLE...
ANGERED BY THE DEATHS OF THEIR COMRADES, IMRRYRIAN ARCHERS SEND BACK A STREAM OF SLIM ARROWS...
..INTO THE VERY MIDST OF THE REAVERS.
LOOSE ARROWS-- AGAIN!
IT IS OUR ONLY CHANCE!
MORE CHANCE THAN SOME OF THE FORWARD ARCHERS HAVE...
...OR THE SOLDIERS WHO MAN THE CITY'S SOLE WAR-MACHINE.


YET, AMID THE CATACLYSM AND THE CARNAGE...
...DYVIM TARKAN STILL LIVES, THOUGH SORELY WOUNDED AND WEAK FROM LOSS OF BLOOD.
RAM HER, I SAID-- AT FULL SPEED!
THE GATE'S ONLY WOOD, FOR THE GODS' OWN SAKE!
AGAIN!
AGAIN!
AGAIN!
NO, I SAY--
NO!
Y-YOU CAN-NOT--
Uhhhn!
AND SO, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN RECORDED HISTORY, A NON-IMRRYRIAN SHIP ENTERS THE HARBOUR OF THE DREAMING CITY.

NOW THE OTHER WAR-SHIPS FOLLOW COUNT SMIORGAN'S CRAFT, FOR ONLY ELRIC CAN TELL THEM WHICH OF FIVE ENTRANCES AHEAD TO TAKE...
THERE!--
-- THE THIRD FROM THE LEFT!
THEN, AMID THE DARKNESS--
LIGHT THE FLARES--
--AND KEEP CLOSE!
ELRIC'S VOICE IS MAGNIFIED A SCORE OF TIMES IN THE ECHOING CAVERN AS, WITH DREADFUL MONOTONY, THE OARS SPLASH ONWARDS...
..TILL, AT LENGTH, THE TUNNEL WIDENS, AND SEVERAL MORE CAVE-MOUTHS YAWN INTO VIEW.
TAKE THE MIDDLE ENTRANCE!
AND THEY DO, AS, AMID THE GRIM AND OMINOUS SILENCE..
..ELRIC STARES DOWN AT THE COLD, DARK WATER... AND SHUDDERS.
SOON, THE SHIPS MOVE ONCE AGAIN INTO BRIGHT SUNLIGHT THAT BLAZES BEFORE THEM...
... AND INTO THE PATH OF MORE BRONZE-ARMORED ARCHERS!
FASTER! ROW FASTER!
SPEED IS OUR ONLY WEAPON NOW!


QUICKLY-- MY WAR-HELM!
WITH FRANTIC ENERGY, THE OARSMEN BEND TO THEIR SWEEPS, EVEN AS IMRRYRIAN ARROWS TAKE A HEAVY TOLL OF THE REAVER CREWMEN...
AND NOW, THE HIGH-WALLED CHANNEL RUNS STRAIGHT, AND ELRIC SEES THE QUAYS OF IMRRYR AHEAD OF HIM
TREMBLE, YYRKOON-- USURPER OF A LONG-DEAD THRONE-- STEALER OF MY COUSIN'S WAKEFULNESS!
THIS DAY, ELRIC SHALL HAVE HIS REVENGE, AT LAST--
--AND IMRRYR, LAST CITY OF MELNIBONÉ, SHALL FALL FOREVER!
AT LAST, THE SHIP BREAKS PAST THE WALLS INTO THE CALM WATER OF THE HARBOUR...
THEIR WARRIORS ARE DRAWN UP ON THE QUAY.
WE MUST WAIT HERE-- TILL THE OTHERS DO COME!

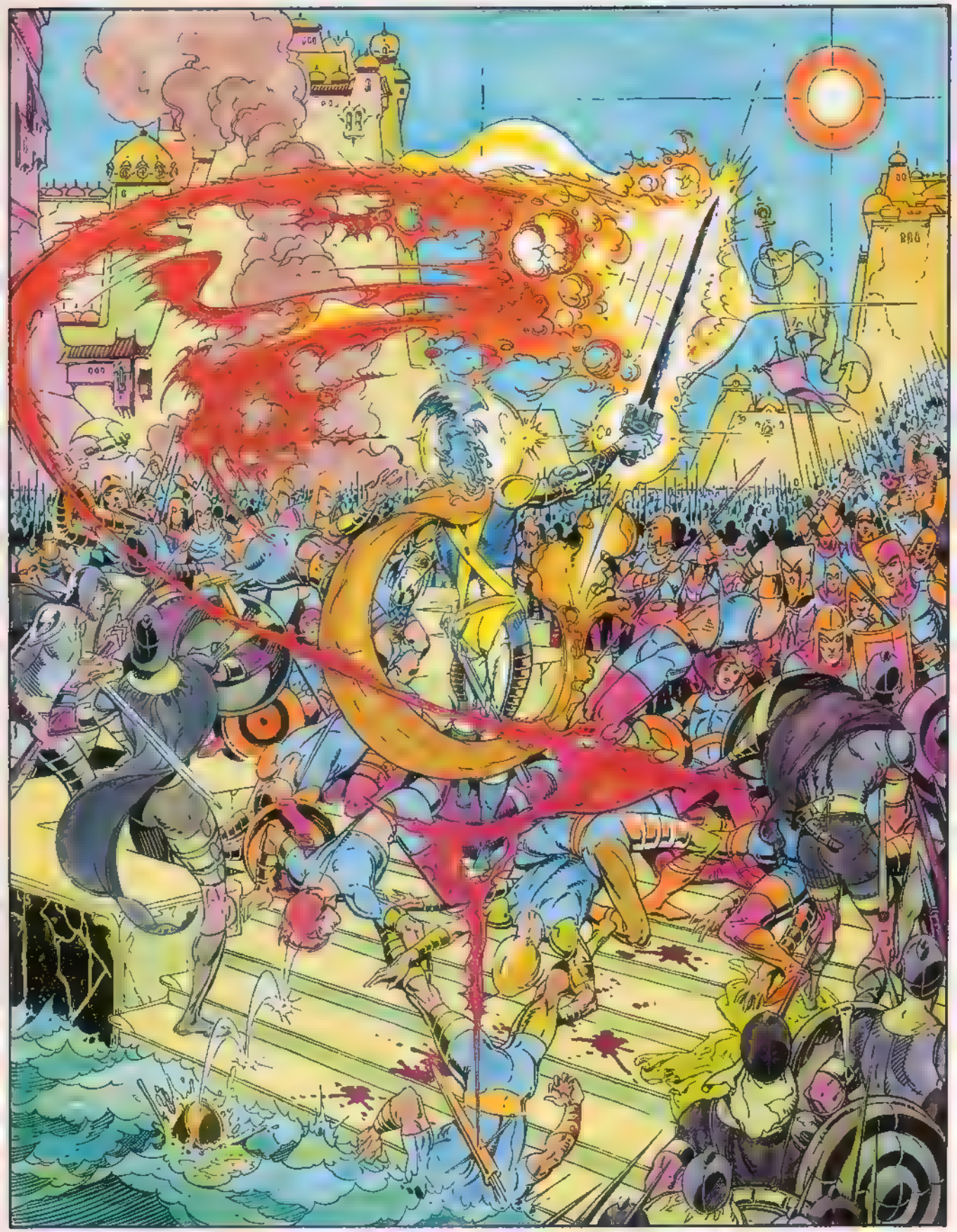

AFTER A SEEMING ETERNITY...
...SOME TWENTY OF THE SEA LORDS' VESSELS HEAVE INTO VIEW...
... AS IMRRYRIAN SOLDIERS BUNCH FORWARD, A FOREST OF SPEARS, YET PLAINLY WITH LITTLE SPIRIT FOR THE COMING FIGHT.
THEY ARE TOO DISCONCERTED BY THE COURSE WHICH EVENTS HAVE TAKEN:
UNBELIEVABLE! FOREIGN WARSHIPS-- IN THE HARBOUR OF IMRRYR!
AND STILL THE SERPENT PROWS COME CLOSER..
...CLOSER.
NOW, AT LAST, STORMBRINGER-- THAT ENCHANTED RUNESWORD ALSO CALLED STEALER OF SOULS-- HOWLS FROM ITS SCABBARD:
ATTACK!

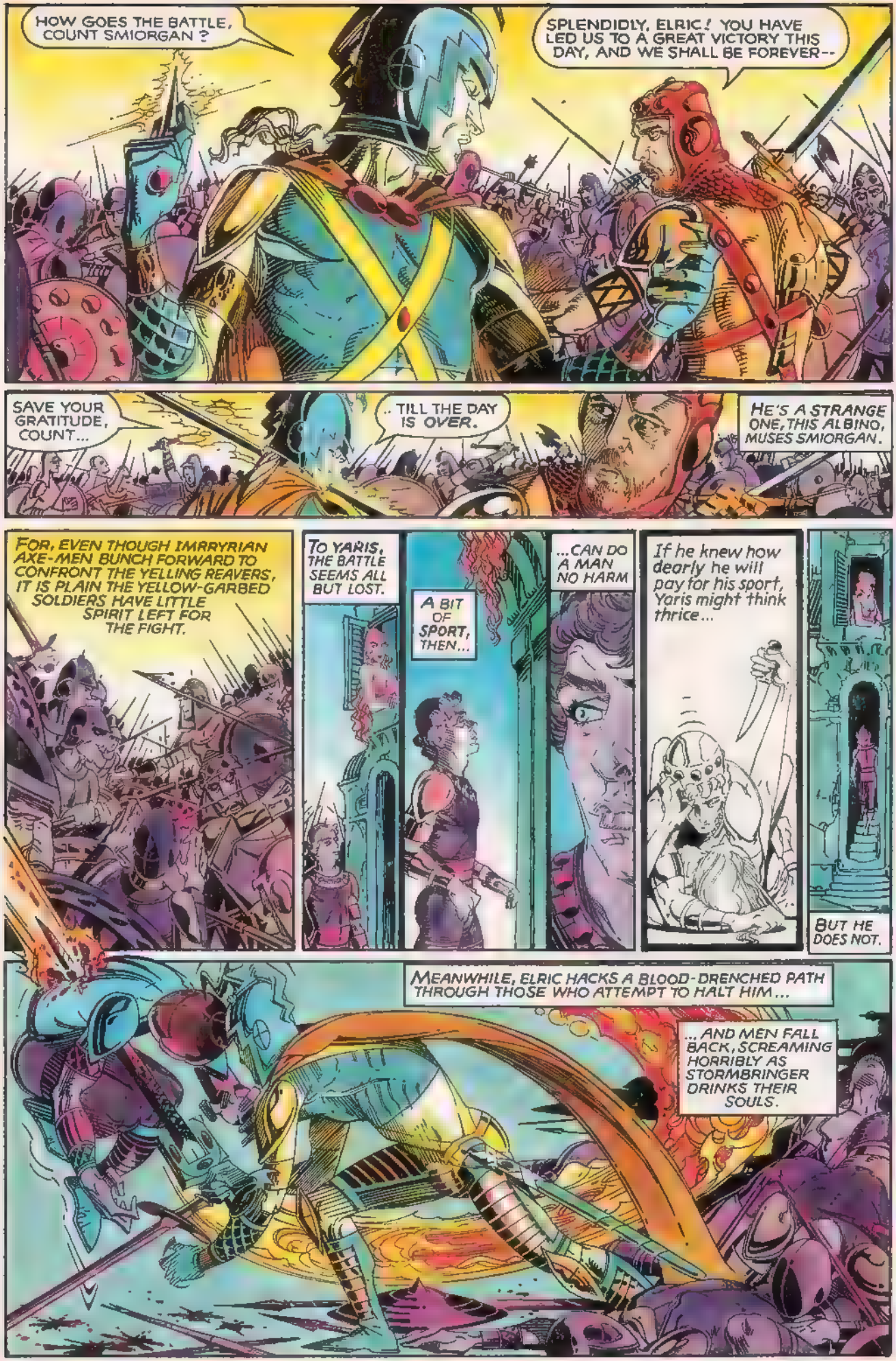
ATTACK!
ATTACK!

Part IV

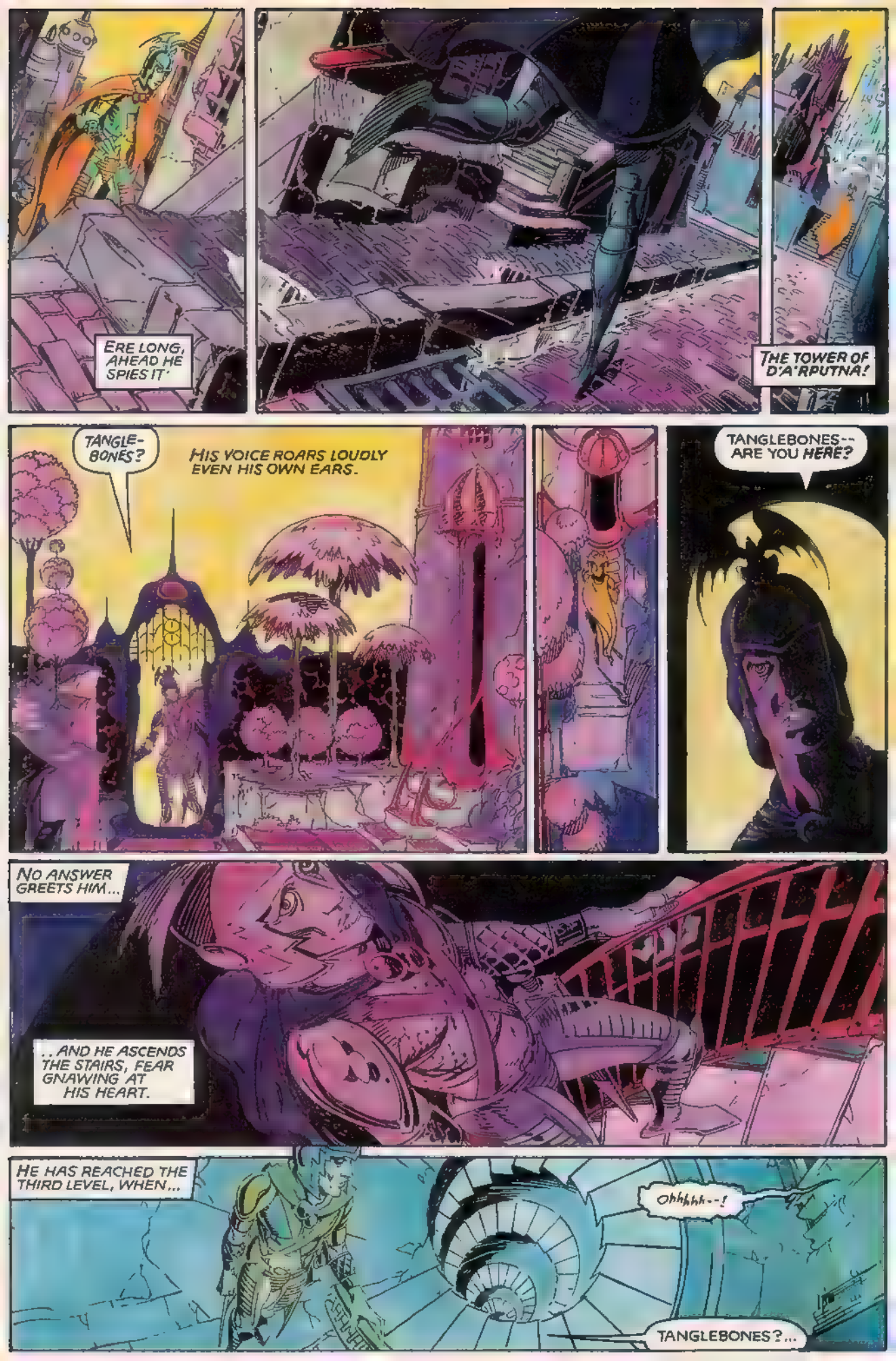
HOWLING DEMONIACALLY NOW THAT IT HAS AGAIN TASTED BLOOD, THE RUNESWORD BEGINS TO WRITHE IN ELRIC'S GRASP, SEEKING FRESH FLESH IN WHICH TO BITE.

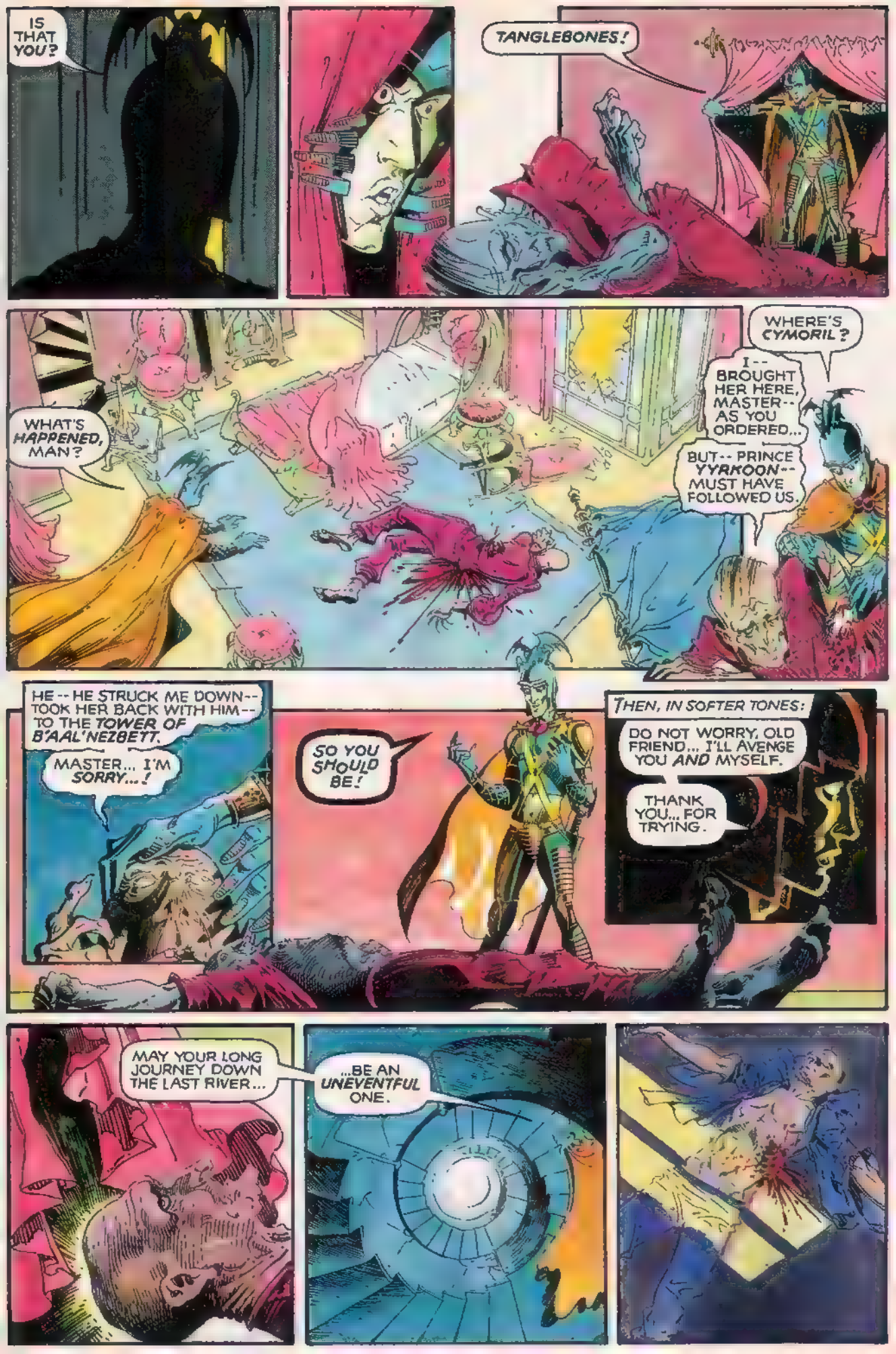
THERE IS A HARD, GRIM SMILE ON THE ALBINO'S COLORLESS LIPS, AND HIS EYES ARE NARROWED AS HE STRIKES WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION AT THE DEFENDING WARRIORS.

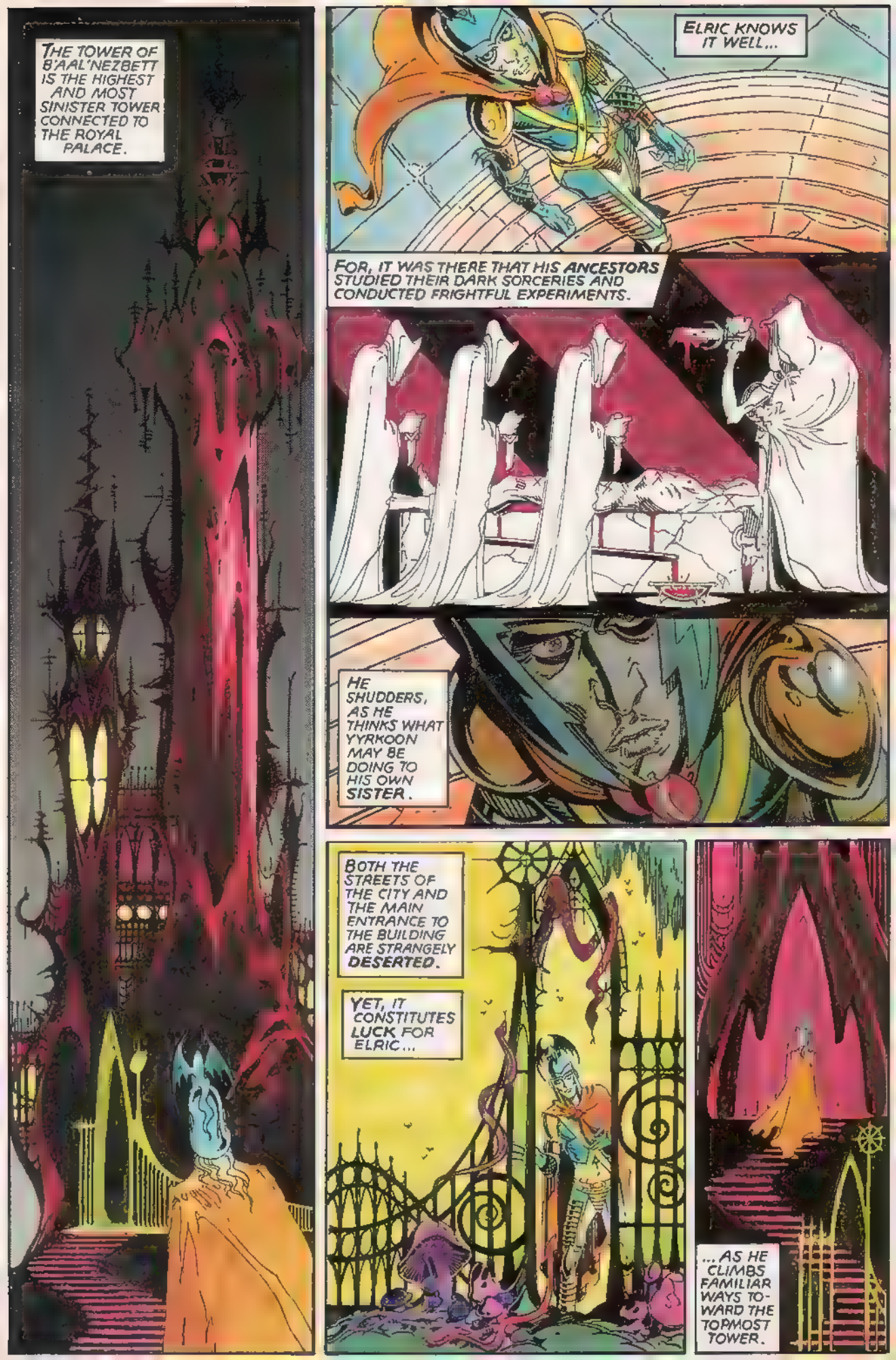


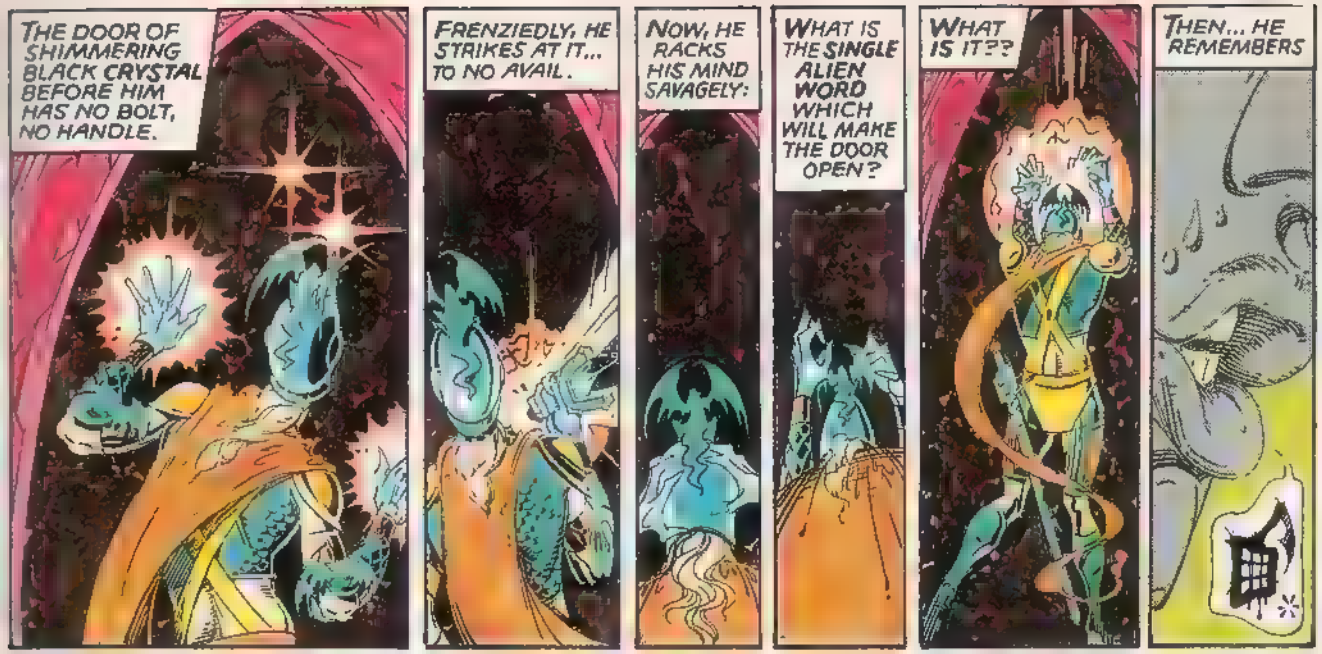

HOW GOES THE BATTLE, COUNT SMIORGAN ?
SPLENDIDLY, ELRIC! YOU HAVE LED US TO A GREAT VICTORY THIS DAY, AND WE SHALL BE FOREVER--
SAVE YOUR GRATITUDE, COUNT...
.. TILL THE DAY IS OVER.
HE'S A STRANGE ONE, THIS ALBINO, MUSES SMIORGAN.
FOR, EVEN THOUGH IMRRYRIAN AXE-MEN BUNCH FORWARD TO CONFRONT THE YELLING REAVERS, IT IS PLAIN THE YELLOW-GARBED SOLDIERS HAVE LITTLE SPIRIT LEFT FOR THE FIGHT.
TO YARIS, THE BATTLE SEEMS ALL BUT LOST.
A BIT OF SPORT, THEN...
...CAN DO A MAN NO HARM
If he knew how dearly he will pay for his sport, Yaris might think thrice...
BUT HE DOES NOT.
MEANWHILE, ELRIC HACKS A BLOOD-DRENCHED PATH THROUGH THOSE WHO ATTEMPT TO HALT HIM...
...AND MEN FALL BACK, SCREAMING HORRIBLY AS STORMBRINGER DRINKS THEIR SOULS.

FROM THIS MOMENT, HOWEVER, HE PLANS TO LEAVE THE FIGHTING TO THOSE HE HAS LED TO IMRRYR...
FOR, HE HAS OTHER THINGS TO DO... AND QUICKLY.
AMID MUCH CONFUSION, IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE FOR TANGLE-BONES TO CARRY OUT HIS ORDERS...
AND A BALEFUL WOE BETIDE ANY WHO STANDS BETWEEN ELRIC OF MELNIBONÉ...
...AND HIS OBJECTIVE.
LIKE A WHITE-FACED GHOUL, CLOTHING TATTERED AND BLOODY, HE RACES THROUGH THE COBBLED MAZE...
...TOWARD THE TALL, SLENDER, HAZY TOWERS BEYOND.


ERE LONG, AHEAD HE SPIES IT·
THE TOWER OF D'A'RPUTNA!
TANGLE-BONES?
HIS VOICE ROARS LOUDLY EVEN HIS OWN EARS.
TANGLEBONES-- ARE YOU HERE?
NO ANSWER GREETS HIM...
..AND HE ASCENDS THE STAIRS, FEAR GNAWING AT HIS HEART.
HE HAS REACHED THE THIRD LEVEL, WHEN...
OHHHHH--!
TANGLEBONES?...

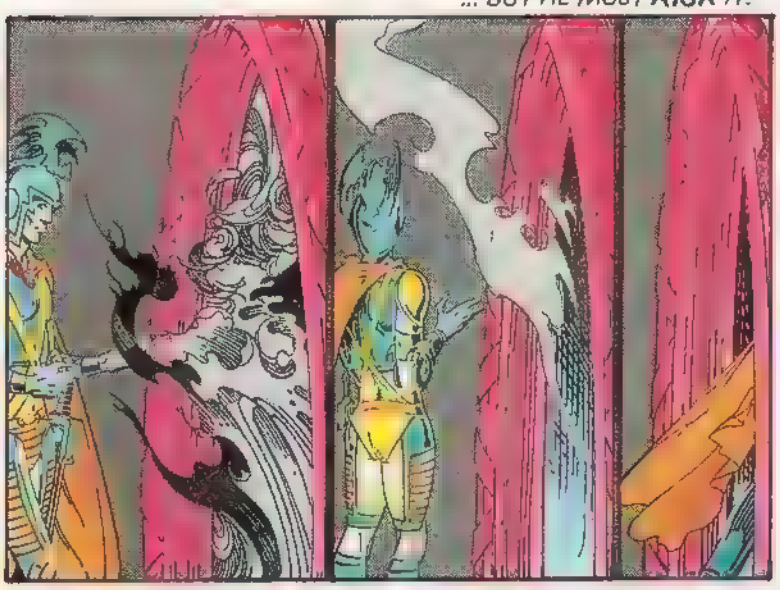

IS THAT YOU?
TANGLEBONES!
WHERE'S CYMORIL?
I-- BROUGHT HER HERE, MASTER-- AS YOU ORDERED...
BUT-- PRINCE YYRKOON-- MUST HAVE FOLLOWED US.
WHAT'S HAPPENED, MAN?
HE-- HE STRUCK ME DOWN-- TOOK HER BACK WITH HIM-- TO THE TOWER OF B'AAL'NEZBETT.
MASTER... I'M SORRY...!
SO YOU SHOULD BE!
THEN, IN SOFTER TONES:
DO NOT WORRY, OLD FRIEND... I'LL AVENGE YOU AND MYSELF.
THANK YOU... FOR TRYING.
MAY YOUR LONG JOURNEY DOWN THE LAST RIVER...
...BE AN UNEVENTFUL ONE.


THE TOWER OF B'AAL'NEZBETT IS THE HIGHEST AND MOST SINISTER TOWER CONNECTED TO THE ROYAL PALACE.
ELRIC KNOWS IT WELL...
FOR, IT WAS THERE THAT HIS ANCESTORS STUDIED THEIR DARK SORCERIES AND CONDUCTED FRIGHTFUL EXPERIMENTS.
HE SHUDDERS, AS HE THINKS WHAT YYRKOON MAY BE DOING TO HIS OWN SISTER.
BOTH THE STREETS OF THE CITY AND THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE BUILDING ARE STRANGELY DESERTED.
YET, IT CONSTITUTES LUCK FOR ELRIC...
...AS HE CLIMBS FAMILIAR WAYS TOWARD THE TOPMOST TOWER.


THE DOOR OF SHIMMERING BLACK CRYSTAL BEFORE HIM HAS NO BOLT, NO HANDLE.
FRENZIEDLY, HE STRIKES AT IT... TO NO AVAIL.
NOW, HE RACKS HIS MIND SAVAGELY:
WHAT IS THE SINGLE ALIEN WORD WHICH WILL MAKE THE DOOR OPEN?
WHAT IS IT??
THEN... HE REMEMBERS

EVEN AS THE CRYSTAL FLOWS INTO NOTHINGNESS, HE IS AWARE THAT HIS COUSIN WILL NOW BE AWARE OF HIS PRESENCE...

... BUT HE MUST RISK IT.



WITHIN, AN EERIE FIRE, CHILLING AND MIND-SHATTERING, LICKS AROUND ELRIC AS HE STRUGGLES UP THE STEPS TOWARD THE CENTRAL CHAMBER...

THERE IS A STRANGE MUSIC SURROUNDING HIM AS HE ASCENDS...
...MUSIC WHICH THROBS AND SOBS AND POUNDS IN HIS HEAD...
...TILL AT LAST HE LOOKS UP...
...AND INTO THE GRINNING FACE OF INSANITY.
HELLO...
...MY DEAR...
...COUSIN.

HELLSPAWN! I SEE YOU HAVE RECOVERED YOUR SWORD MOURNBLADE.
WELL, TEST ITS POWER AGAINST ITS BROTHER, IF YOU DARE.
I HAVE COME TO DESTROY YOU, COUSIN!
THE RUNESWORD WRITHES NOW IN ELRIC'S FIST...
...SO THAT HE CAN SCARCELY CONTROL IT AS HE PLUNGES UP THE LAST FEW STEPS...
...TO WHERE THE TWO BLADES MEET, IN A TERRIBLE, SHRIEKING ROAR!
ELRIC FEELS LIKE A PUPPET, NO LONGER HIS OWN MASTER -- AS THE BLADE DECIDES HIS ACTIONS FOR HIM.

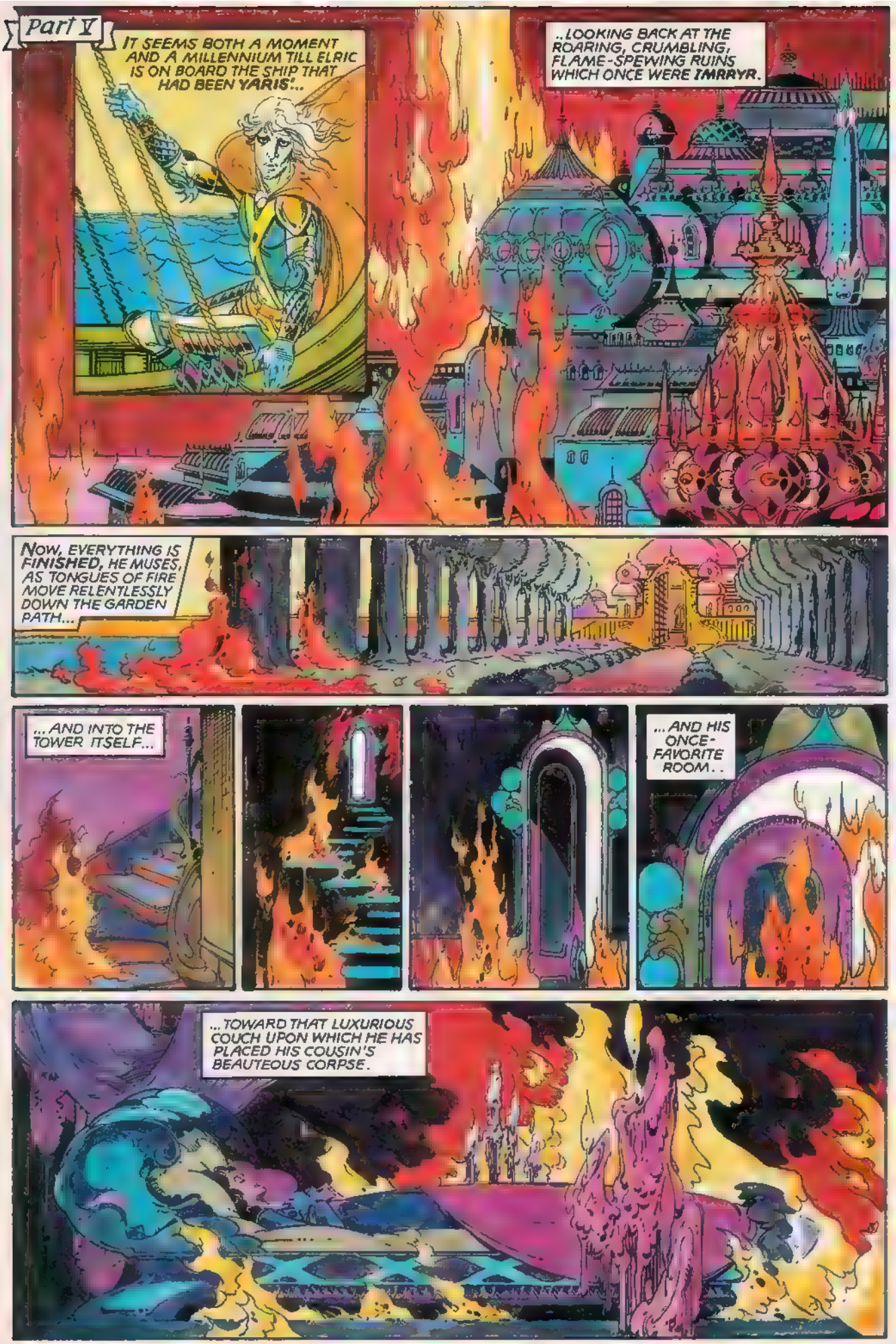
HE REALIZES HE HAS DRUNK FIRST BLOOD ONLY WHEN YYRKOON SUDDENLY HOWLS IN AGONY...
...THOUGH MOURNBLADE THEN CATCHES ELRIC IN THE VERY PLACE HE HAS WOUNDED HIS COUSIN.
STILL, HE CONTINUES TO CIRCLE THE USURPER
...THEN WOUNDS HIM WITH A BLOW STRONG ENOUGH TO HAVE KILLED...
... ANY OTHER MAN.
THEN, BEHIND YYRKOON
...HE SEES..
CYMORIL.
IT IS THEN THAT YYRKOON BEGINS TO LAUGH...
... LAUGH LIKE A GIBBERING DEMON FRESH FROM THE FOULEST DEPTHS OF HELL!
HIS SANITY HAS BROKEN AT LAST...
...THOUGH EVEN A MADMAN CAN STILL WIELD AN ENCHANTED SWORD.

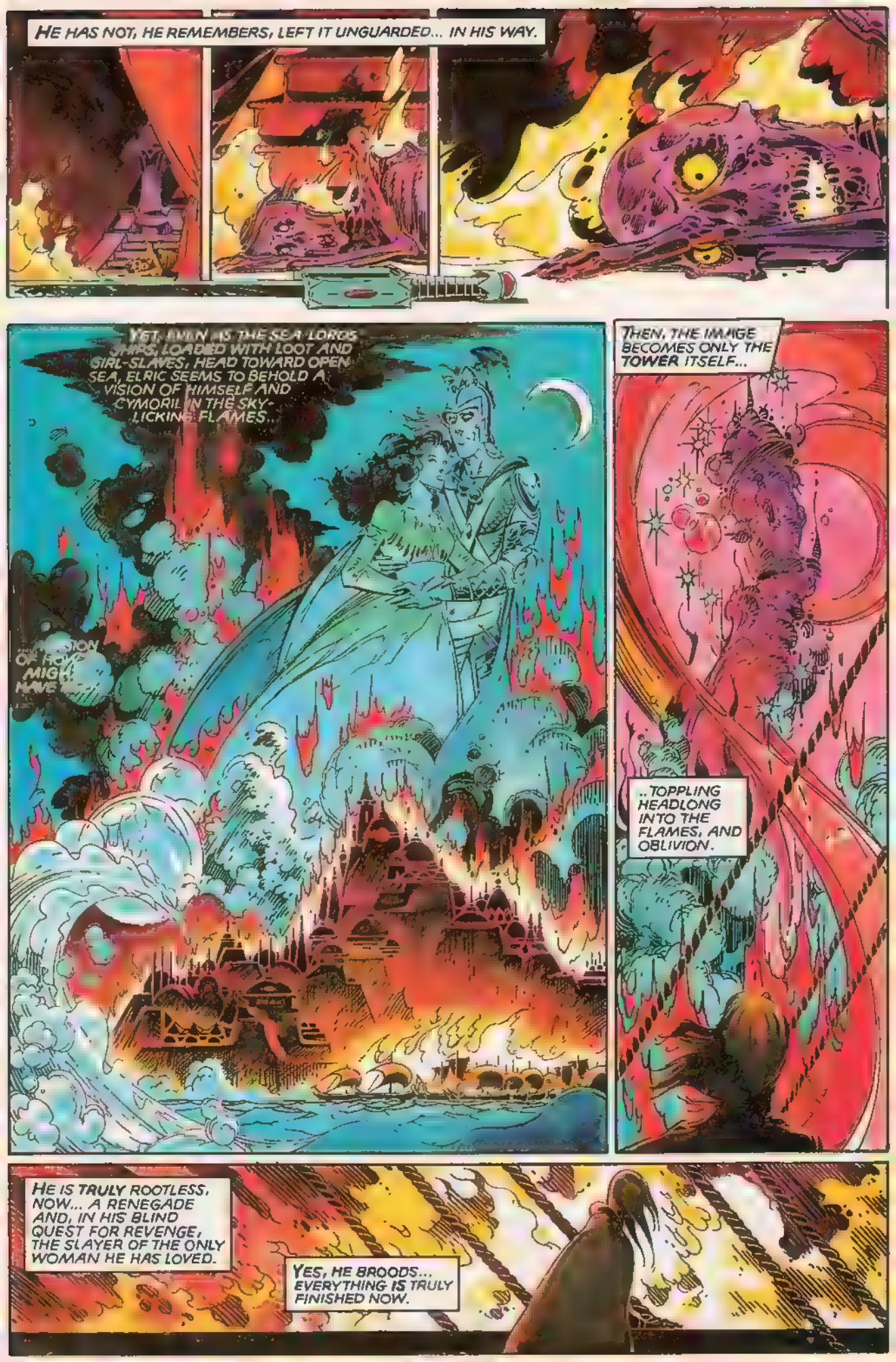
AND AS THE CLANG OF CLASHING BLADES MINGLES FREELY WITH THE LAUGHTER OF LUNACY, CYMORIL STIRS...
...AWAKENS
NO!
SWORDS STILL SWING IN UNHOLY, MYSTIC ARCS...
...AS ELRIC BEGINS AT LAST TO PRESS HIS ADVANTAGE...
ELRIC! SAVE ME!
...THOUGH THE GREAT SORCERY THAT HIS COUSIN HAS CONJURED UP PROTECTS HIM, EVEN IN MADNESS.
SAVE ME NOW, ELRIC-- ELSE WE ARE DOOMED FOR ETERNITY!

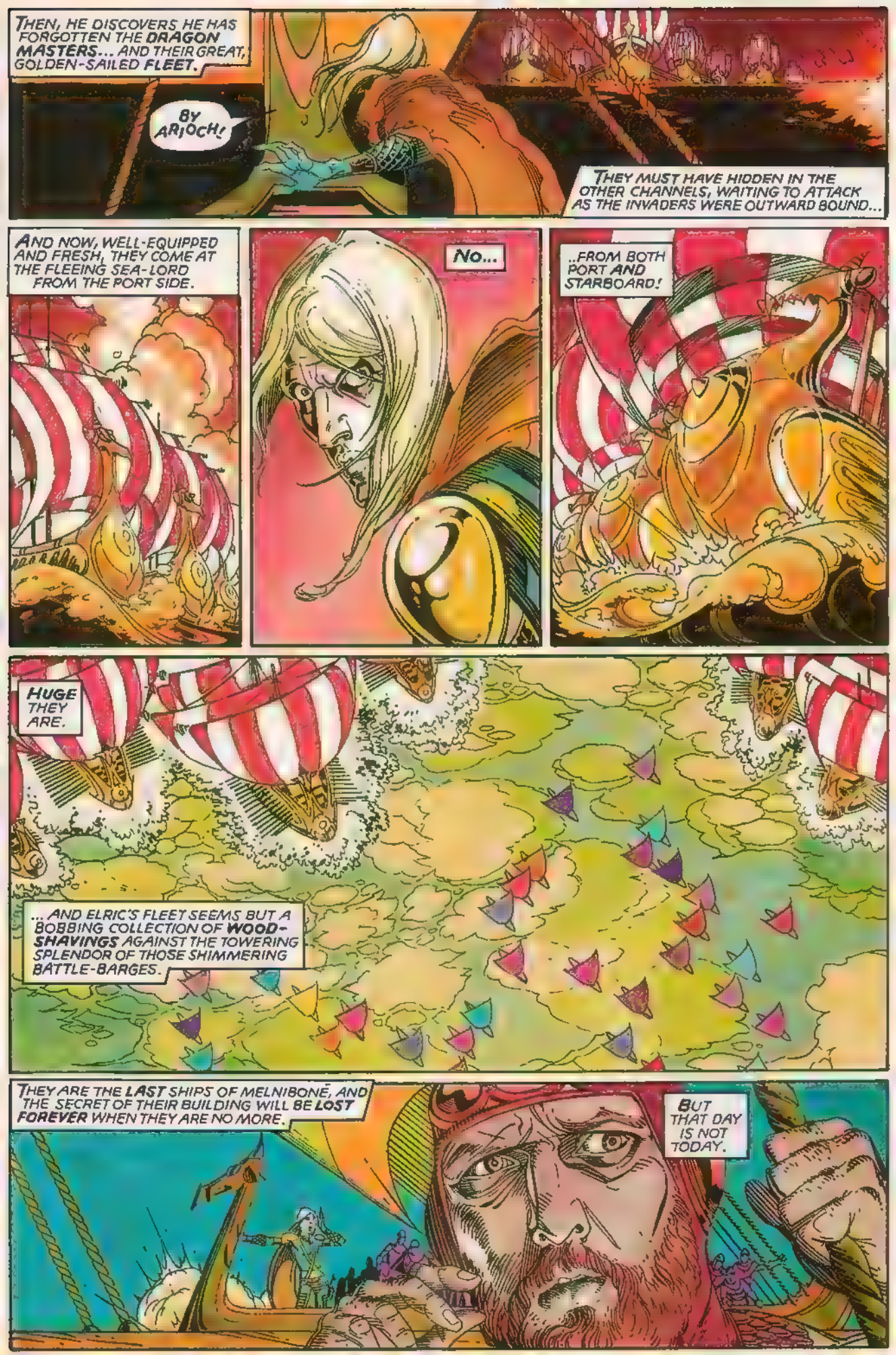
ELRIC-- IN THE GODS' NAME, PUT STORMBRINGER AWAY!
I WOULD NOT-- EVEN IF I COULD!
I'LL PUT MY SWORD AWAY, DEAR CYMORIL--
--IF YOU'LL COME TO ME!
OHHHHH--!
ELRIC TAKES ADVANTAGE OF HIS OPPONENT'S MAD DISTRACTION--
-- ALL BUT SEVERING TRUNK FROM WAIST--
--BUT STILL, YYRKOON LIVES!
FOOL! I DRAW MY VITALITY FROM MY RUNE-CARVED BLADE, AS YOU DO FROM YOURS.
BUT, IF YOU REALLY WANT MY SISTER THAT MUCH--
--TAKE HER!
AND SO, CYMORIL DIES SCREAMING--
--ON THE POINT OF STORMBRINGER.

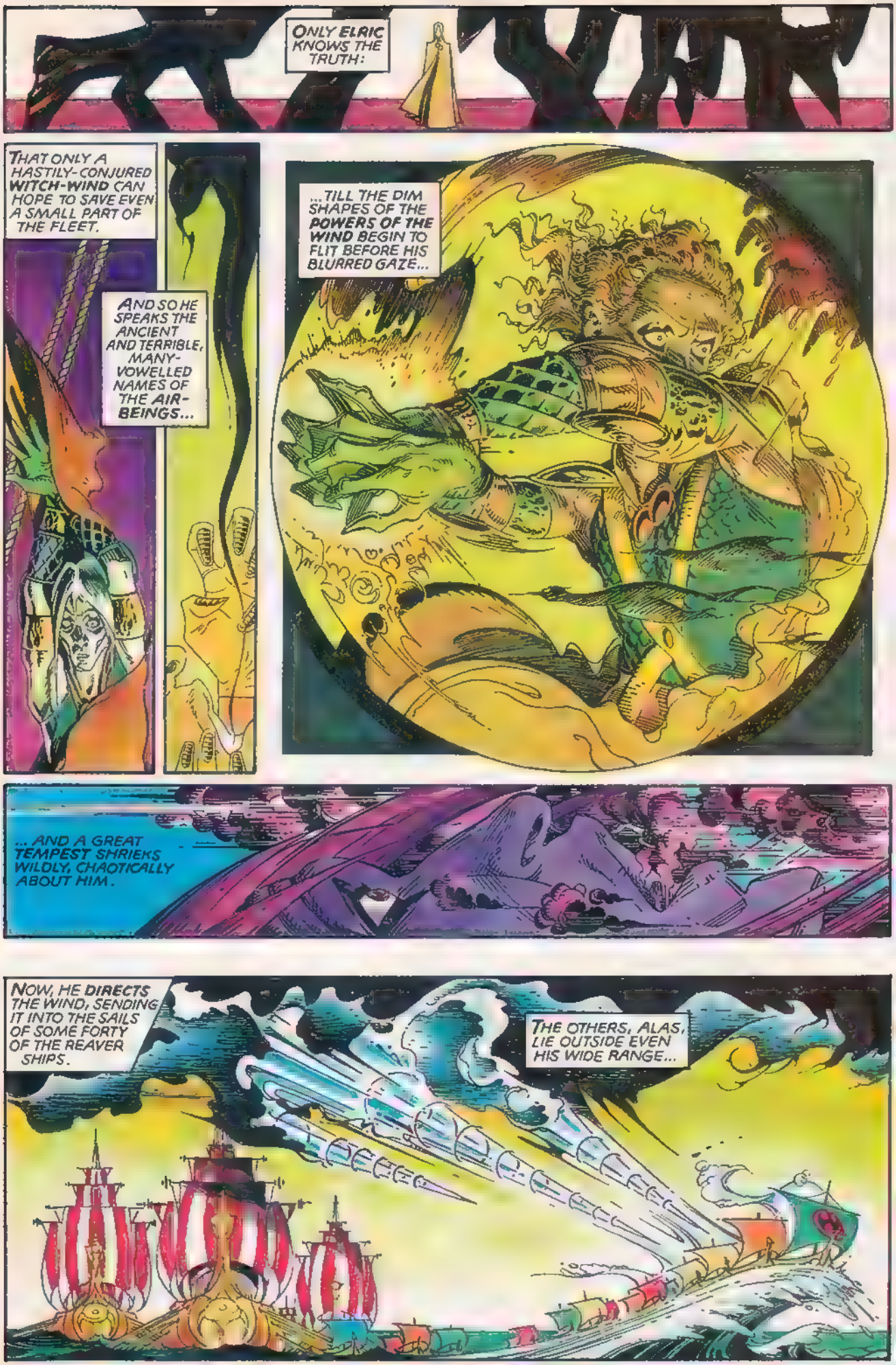
THEN...
YYRKOON
LAUGHS
ONE FINAL CACKLING SHRIEK
AND HIS BLACK SOUL GOES HOWLING DOWN TO HELL

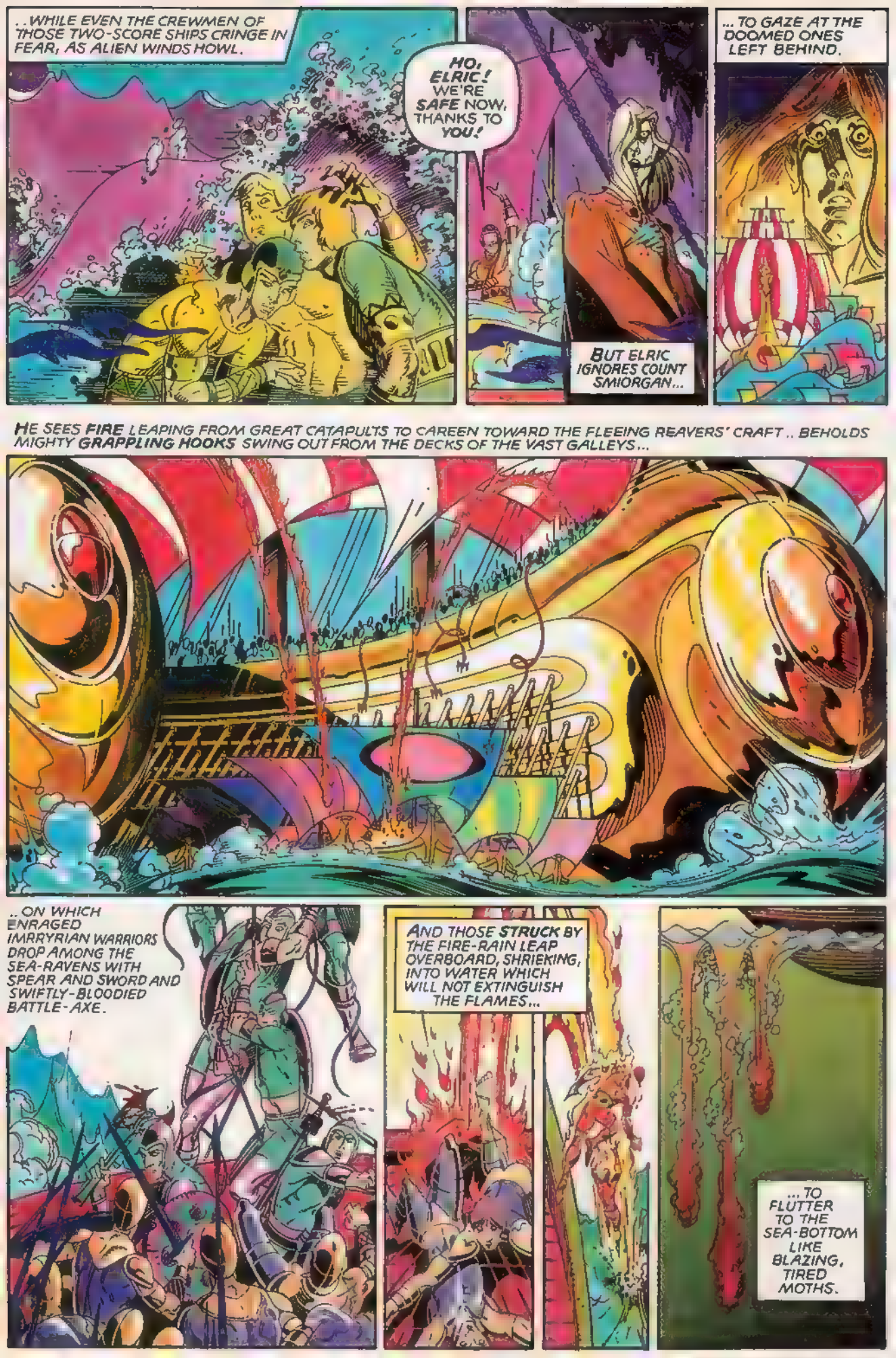
ELRIC... DAZED, UNABLE TO MARSHAL HIS THOUGHTS... LOOKS DOWN AT THE DEAD BODY OF THE BROTHER AND THE SISTER.
FOR A MOMENT, HE SEES THEM ONLY AS CORPSES... A MAN'S AND A WOMAN'S.
THEN, DARK TRUTH DAWNS ON HIS CLEARING BRAIN, AND HE MOANS IN GRIEF, LIKE AN ANIMAL...
... AS THE FALLEN RUNESWORD, STAINED BY THE WOMAN'S LIFE-BLOOD, CLATTERS UNHEEDED DOWN THE STAIRS.
OH, CYMORIL...
...CYMORIL...
...I HAVE... SLAIN YOU...!

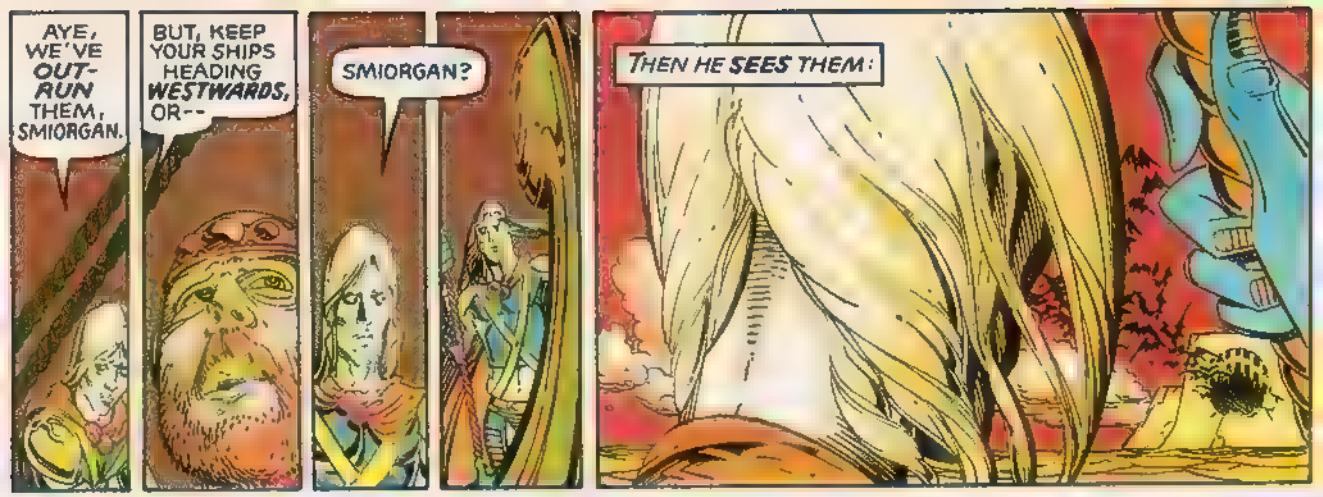

Part V
IT SEEMS BOTH A MOMENT AND A MILLENNIUM TILL ELRIC IS ON BOARD THE SHIP THAT HAD BEEN YARIS'...
..LOOKING BACK AT THE ROARING, CRUMBLING, FLAME-SPEWING RUINS WHICH ONCE WERE IMRRYR.
NOW, EVERYTHING IS FINISHED, HE MUSES, AS TONGUES OF FIRE MOVE RELENTLESSLY DOWN THE GARDEN PATH...
...AND INTO THE TOWER ITSELF...
...AND HIS ONCE-FAVORITE ROOM..
...TOWARD THAT LUXURIOUS COUCH UPON WHICH HE HAS PLACED HIS COUSIN'S BEAUTEOUS CORPSE.


HE HAS NOT, HE REMEMBERS, LEFT IT UNGUARDED... IN HIS WAY.
YET, EVEN AS THE SEA-LORDS SAIL, LOADED WITH LOOT AND GIRL-SLAVES, HEAD TOWARD OPEN SEA, ELRIC SEEMS TO BEHOLD A VISION OF HIMSELF AND CYMORIL IN THE SKY-LICKING FLAMES...
THEN, THE IMAGE BECOMES ONLY THE TOWER ITSELF...
..TOPPLING HEADLONG INTO THE FLAMES, AND OBLIVION.
HE IS TRULY ROOTLESS, NOW... A RENEGADE AND, IN HIS BLIND QUEST FOR REVENGE, THE SLAYER OF THE ONLY WOMAN HE HAS LOVED.
YES, HE BROODS... EVERYTHING IS TRULY FINISHED NOW.

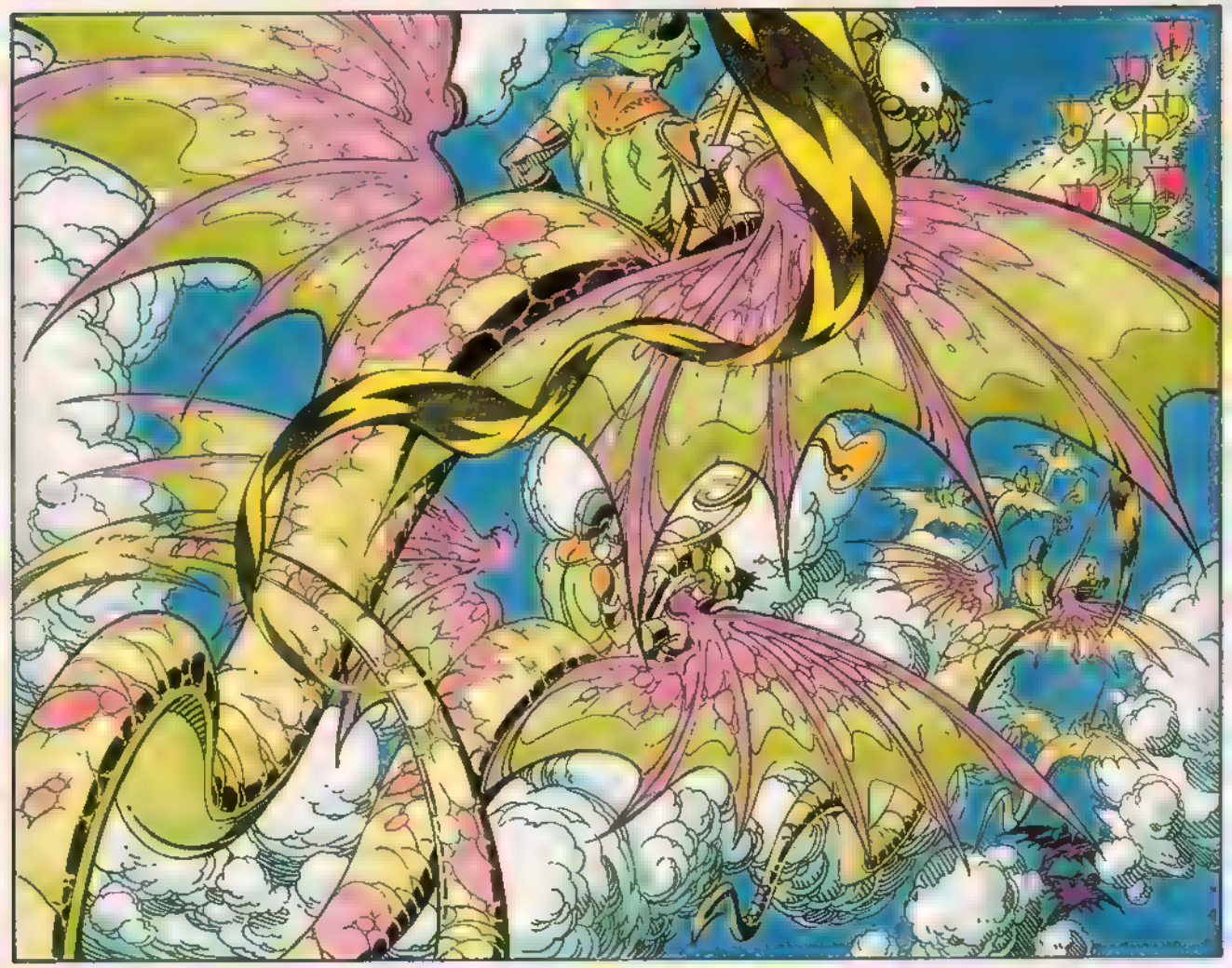

THEN, HE DISCOVERS HE HAS FORGOTTEN THE DRAGON MASTERS... AND THEIR GREAT, GOLDEN-SAILED FLEET.
BY ARIOCH!
THEY MUST HAVE HIDDEN IN THE OTHER CHANNELS, WAITING TO ATTACK AS THE INVADERS WERE OUTWARD BOUND...
AND NOW, WELL-EQUIPPED AND FRESH, THEY COME AT THE FLEEING SEA-LORD FROM THE PORT SIDE.
No...
..FROM BOTH PORT AND STARBOARD!
HUGE THEY ARE.
... AND ELRIC'S FLEET SEEMS BUT A BOBBING COLLECTION OF WOOD-SHAVINGS AGAINST THE TOWERING SPLENDOR OF THOSE SHIMMERING BATTLE-BARGES.
THEY ARE THE LAST SHIPS OF MELNIBONÉ, AND THE SECRET OF THEIR BUILDING WILL BE LOST FOREVER WHEN THEY ARE NO MORE.
BUT THAT DAY IS NOT TODAY.

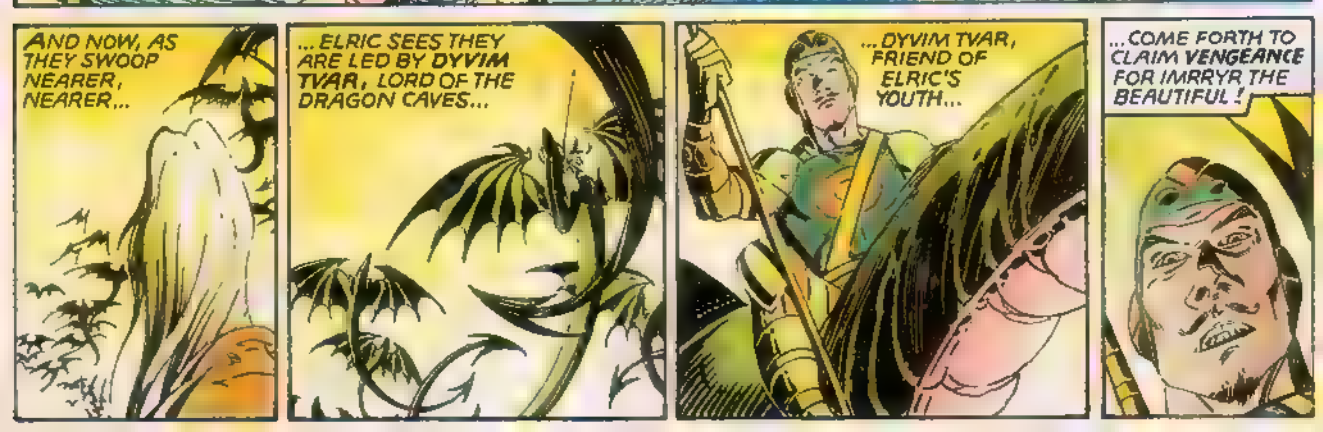

ONLY ELRIC KNOWS THE TRUTH:
THAT ONLY A HASTILY-CONJURED WITCH-WIND CAN HOPE TO SAVE EVEN A SMALL PART OF THE FLEET.
AND SO HE SPEAKS THE ANCIENT AND TERRIBLE, MANY-VOWELLED NAMES OF THE AIR-BEINGS...
...TILL THE DIM SHAPES OF THE POWERS OF THE WIND BEGIN TO FLIT BEFORE HIS BLURRED GAZE...
... AND A GREAT TEMPEST SHRIEKS WILDLY, CHAOTICALLY ABOUT HIM.
NOW, HE DIRECTS THE WIND, SENDING IT INTO THE SAILS OF SOME FORTY OF THE REAVER SHIPS.
THE OTHERS, ALAS, LIE OUTSIDE EVEN HIS WIDE RANGE...


..WHILE EVEN THE CREWMEN OF THOSE TWO-SCORE SHIPS CRINGE IN FEAR, AS ALIEN WINDS HOWL.
HO, ELRIC! WE'RE SAFE NOW, THANKS TO YOU!
BUT ELRIC IGNORES COUNT SMIORGAN...
...TO GAZE AT THE DOOMED ONES LEFT BEHIND.
HE SEES FIRE LEAPING FROM GREAT CATAPULTS TO CAREEN TOWARD THE FLEEING REAVERS' CRAFT .. BEHOLDS MIGHTY GRAPPLING HOOKS SWING OUT FROM THE DECKS OF THE VAST GALLEYS...
..ON WHICH ENRAGED IMRRYRIAN WARRIORS DROP AMONG THE SEA-RAVENS WITH SPEAR AND SWORD AND SWIFTLY-BLOODIED BATTLE-AXE.
AND THOSE STRUCK BY THE FIRE-RAIN LEAP OVERBOARD, SHRIEKING, INTO WATER WHICH WILL NOT EXTINGUISH THE FLAMES...
...TO FLUTTER TO THE SEA-BOTTOM LIKE BLAZING, TIRED MOTHS.



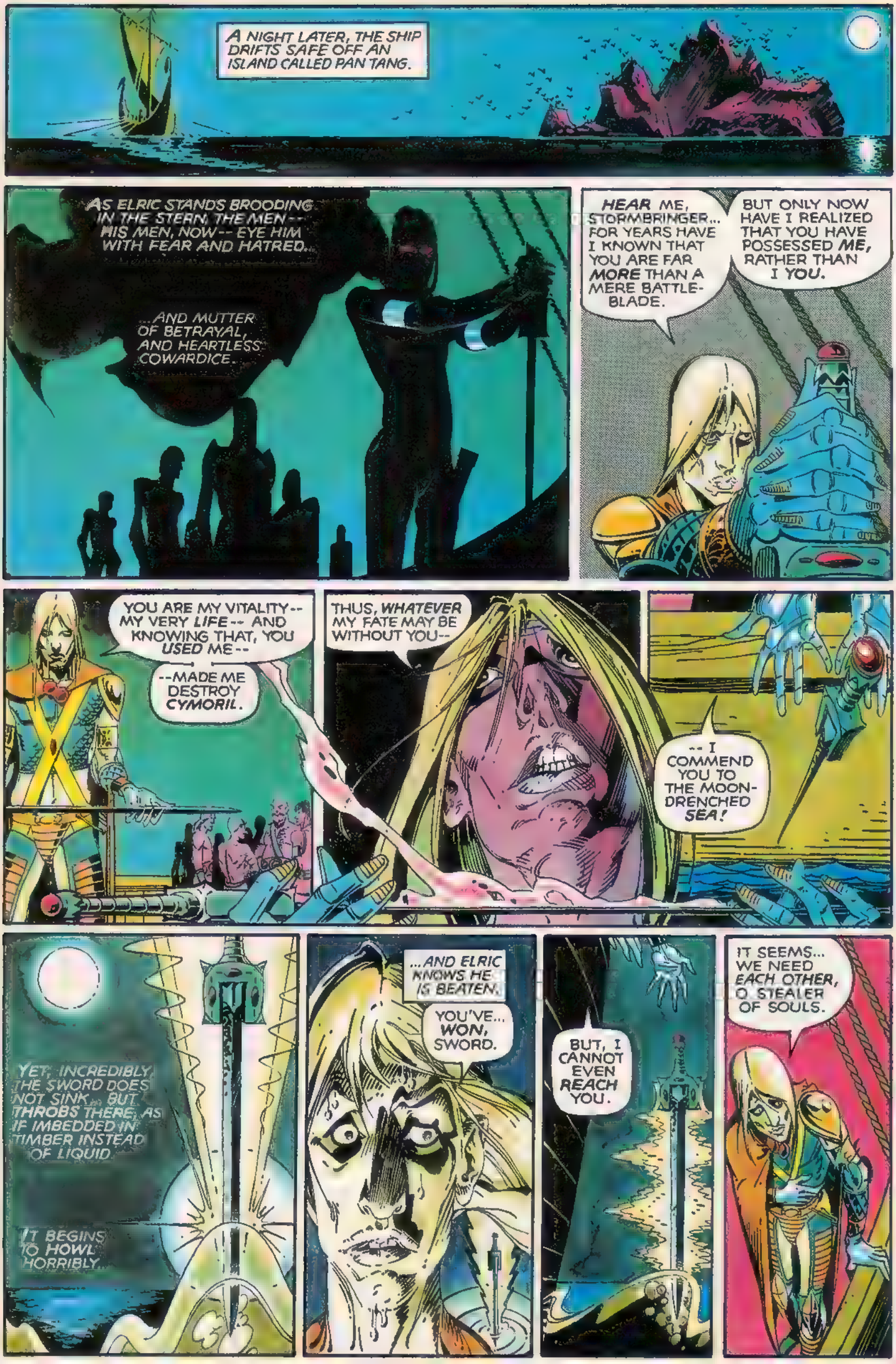
ELRIC HAS TOLD THE REAVERS NOTHING OF THE **FLYING DRAGONS** UPON WHICH MELNIBONÉANS OF OLD RODE FORTH TO BATTLE... MONSTERS WHOSE COMBUSTIBLE VENOM CAN SET FIRE TO WOOD OR FABRIC ON CONTACT...

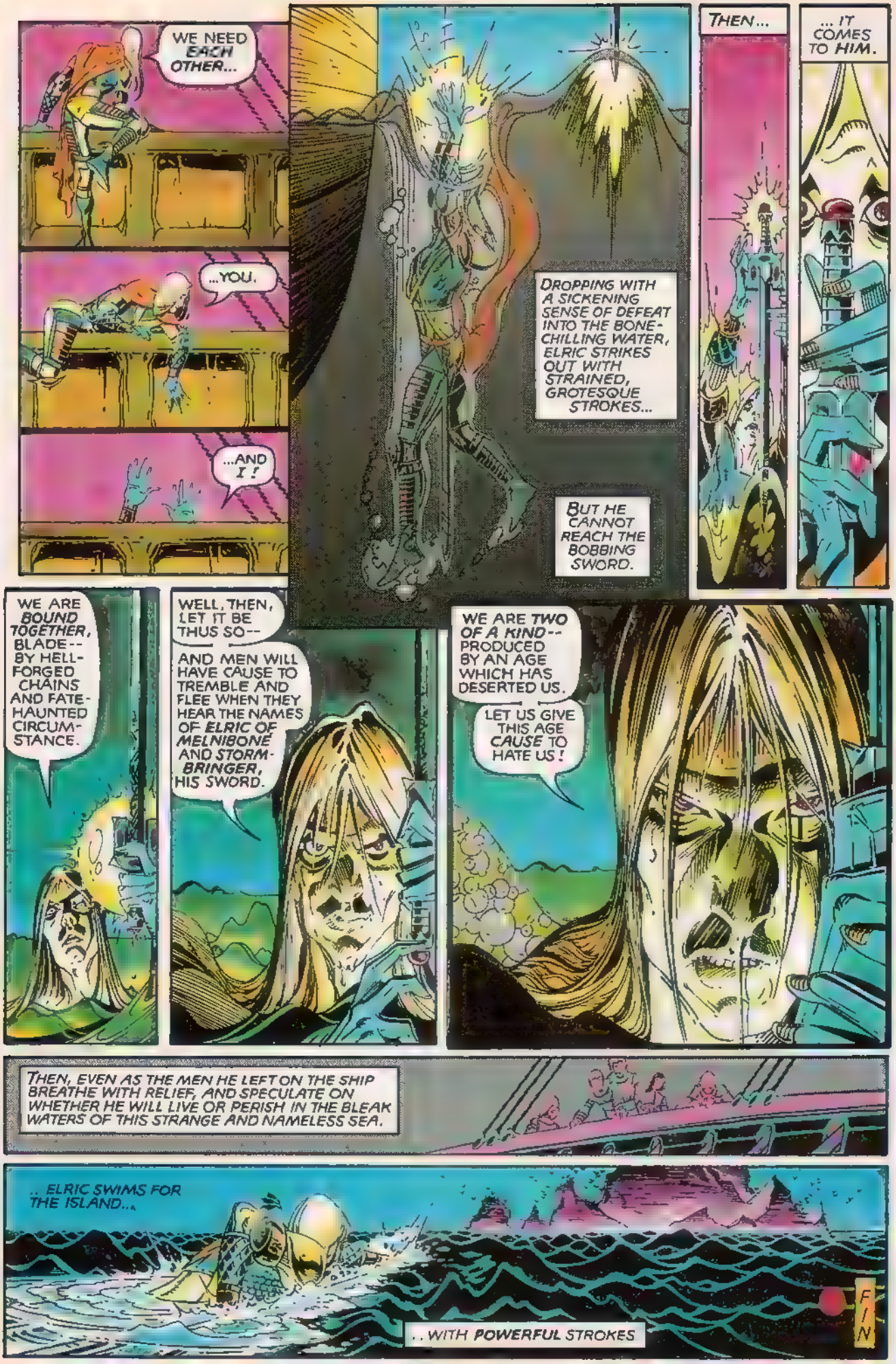



AND NOW, AS THEY SWOOP NEARER, NEARER...
...ELRIC SEES THEY ARE LED BY DYVIM TVAR, LORD OF THE DRAGON CAVES...
...DYVIM TVAR, FRIEND OF ELRIC'S YOUTH...
...COME FORTH TO CLAIM VENGEANCE FOR IMRRYR THE BEAUTIFUL!

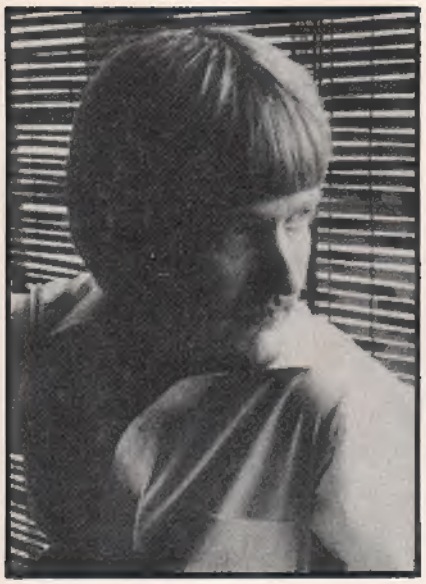
PREPARE TO MEET THE DRAGONS, WHEN THEY DIVE UPON YOU, SMIORGAN!
DIVE?
AND INDEED, AT THAT MOMENT, ONE GROUP OF HUGE REPTILES BEGINS TO CLIMB SKYWARD..
AND ELRIC CAN SEE THE DESPAIR IN THE FACES OF THE REAVERS AS THEY PREPARE, NIGH-HOPELESSLY, TO MEET THEM WHEN THEY DESCEND AGAIN.
AS FOR ELRIC:
HE MAKES HIS DECISION, HATING HIMSELF.
...HE CALLS OFF THE WITCH-WIND...
...TO PUT ALL HIS POWERS INTO SENDING A STRONGER WIND INTO THE SAILS OF HIS OWN SHIP ALONE!
WHEN HE DIES, IT WILL BE BY HIS OWN HAND, NOT BY THOSE OF HIS FORMER RACE.
NOW, EVEN AS THE FLAMMABLE VENOM OF THE DIVING DRAGONS STRIKES THE LAST SHIP IN LINE...

ELRIC'S SHIP MOVES FAST NOW, ACROSS THE WATER...
... EVEN AS THE DRAGONS APPROACH THE SUDDENLY BECALMED VESSELS...
.. AND THE MAN WHO, MOST OF ALL, HAD TRUSTED ELRIC·
ELRIC! WHY IN THE GODS' NAMES HAVE YOU DESERTED US??
WHY--?
BEHIND ELRIC, THE LAST OF THE REAVER SHIPS FLARE TO ABRUPT, APPALLING
AND DEAD YARIS' CREW, THOUGH HALF-THANKFUL THEY HAVE ESCAPED THE FATE OF THEIR COMRADES, STARE ACCUSINGLY AT HIM.
HE SOBS ALOUD, UNHEEDING... GREAT GRIEFS RACKING HIS SOUL.


A NIGHT LATER, THE SHIP DRIFTS SAFE OFF AN ISLAND CALLED PAN TANG.
AS ELRIC STANDS BROODING IN THE STERN, THE MEN -- HIS MEN, NOW -- EYE HIM WITH FEAR AND HATRED..
...AND MUTTER OF BETRAYAL, AND HEARTLESS COWARDICE..
HEAR ME, STORMBRINGER... FOR YEARS HAVE I KNOWN THAT YOU ARE FAR MORE THAN A MERE BATTLE-BLADE.
BUT ONLY NOW HAVE I REALIZED THAT YOU HAVE POSSESSED ME, RATHER THAN I YOU.
YOU ARE MY VITALITY -- MY VERY LIFE -- AND KNOWING THAT, YOU USED ME --
--MADE ME DESTROY CYMORIL.
THUS, WHATEVER MY FATE MAY BE WITHOUT YOU--
-- I COMMEND YOU TO THE MOON-DRENCHED SEA!
YET, INCREDIBLY, THE SWORD DOES NOT SINK... BUT THROBS THERE, AS IF IMBEDDED IN TIMBER INSTEAD OF LIQUID.
IT BEGINS TO HOWL HORRIBLY.
...AND ELRIC KNOWS HE IS BEATEN.
YOU'VE... WON, SWORD.
BUT, I CANNOT EVEN REACH YOU.
IT SEEMS... WE NEED EACH OTHER, O STEALER OF SOULS.


WE NEED EACH OTHER...
...YOU.
...AND I!
DROPPING WITH A SICKENING SENSE OF DEFEAT INTO THE BONE-CHILLING WATER, ELRIC STRIKES OUT WITH STRAINED, GROTESQUE STROKES...
BUT HE CANNOT REACH THE BOBBING SWORD.
THEN...
... IT COMES TO HIM.
WE ARE BOUND TOGETHER, BLADE-- BY HELL-FORGED CHAINS AND FATE-HAUNTED CIRCUM-STANCE.
WELL, THEN, LET IT BE THUS SO--
AND MEN WILL HAVE CAUSE TO TREMBLE AND FLEE WHEN THEY HEAR THE NAMES OF ELRIC OF MELNIBONE AND STORM-BRINGER, HIS SWORD.
WE ARE TWO OF A KIND-- PRODUCED BY AN AGE WHICH HAS DESERTED US.
LET US GIVE THIS AGE CAUSE TO HATE US!
THEN, EVEN AS THE MEN HE LEFT ON THE SHIP BREATHE WITH RELIEF, AND SPECULATE ON WHETHER HE WILL LIVE OR PERISH IN THE BLEAK WATERS OF THIS STRANGE AND NAMELESS SEA.
.. ELRIC SWIMS FOR THE ISLAND...
.. WITH POWERFUL STROKES
FIN

Roy Thomas is perhaps best known for bringing *Conan the Barbarian* to Marvel Comics in 1971 and infusing it with life for ten years. He has written numerous other titles and has been the Editor of Marvel Comics. He now is a script writer for DC Comics and a movie screenwriter. Roy resides in Los Angeles.



P. Craig Russell has been a professional comics artist and illustrator since 1972. His best known comics work are the *Killraven* series and the *Dr. Strange Annual* for Marvel Comics, *Parsifal* for Star*Reach Productions and *Night Music* for Eclipse Productions. A graduate of the University of Cincinatti, Craig resides in Kent, Ohio.

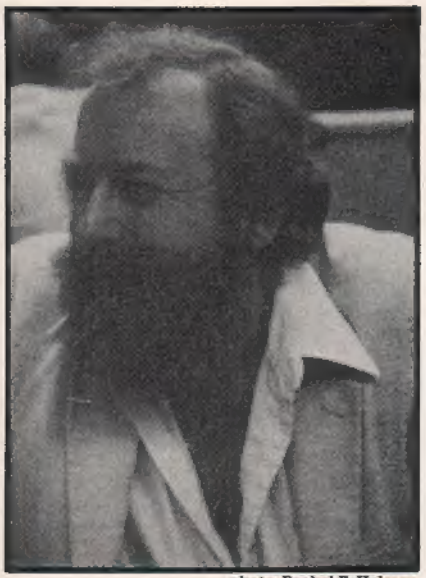


photo: Rachel E. Holman

Michael Moorcock has been an extremely prolific author of science-fiction and sword and sorcery fiction as well as editor of *New Worlds,* the influential British science-fiction magazine. Two of his most recent books are *The War Hound and the World's Pain* and *Byzantium Endures.* Michael resides in London.